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orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance." Erasmus.

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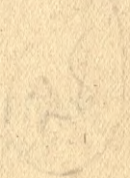
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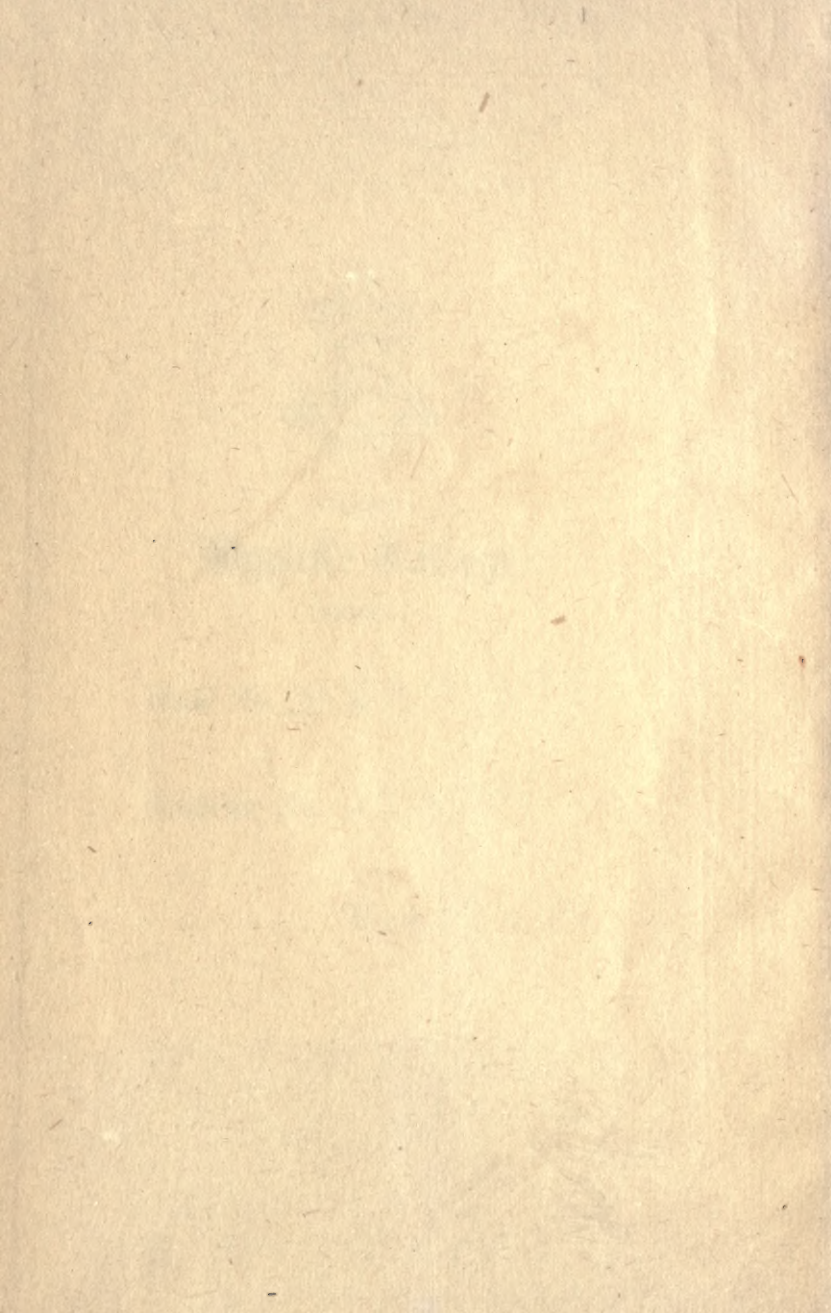
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Edited for the Churchmen's Union by the  
Rev. H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND  
THE EUCHARIST

## THE MODERN CHURCHMAN'S LIBRARY

Edited by the Rev. H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

An effort to meet the need for clear, short, truthful books dealing with the Christian religion from the standpoint of those who, while accepting the main results of modern scientific, historical, and literary research, are yet believers in the Christian Religion and working members of the Church of England.

- I. THE FAITH OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN. By the Rev. Canon M. G. GLAZEBROOK, D.D.
- II. THE GENIUS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH. By the Rev. ALFRED FAWKES, M.A.
- III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. By the Rev. J. R. COHU, M.A.
- IV. BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND THE EUCHARIST. By the Rev. JOHN GAMBLE, B.D.



BAPTISM  
CONFIRMATION AND  
THE EUCHARIST

*TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF  
THE CHURCH CATECHISM*

BY JOHN GAMBLE, B.D.

VICAR OF S. MARY'S, LEIGH WOODS, CLIFTON

AUTHOR OF "CHRIST AND CRITICISM," "THE SPIRITUAL SEQUENCE OF  
THE BIBLE," "CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WORSHIP," ETC.

"The invisible things of Him since the  
creation of the world are clearly seen,  
being perceived through the things  
that are made."

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1918

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WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,  
LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND

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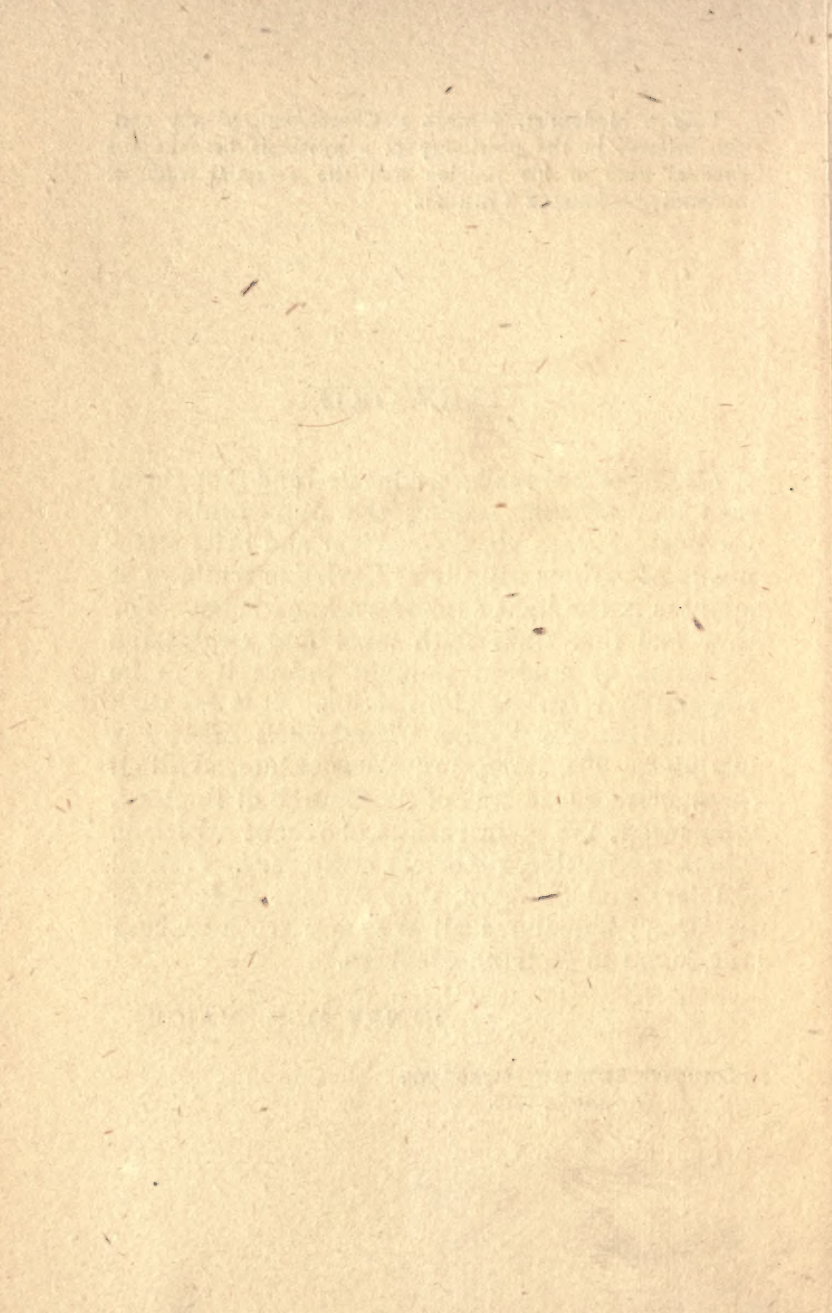
“By a Modernist, I mean a Churchman, of any sort, who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity.”—GEORGE TYRRELL.

## FOREWORD

A LARGE body of readers, educated and thoughtful men and women, lacking the opportunity for theological research, desire clear and brief statements of various aspects of Christian truth, as it appears in the light of modern knowledge. For they feel that their faith must find expression in terms of modern thought before it can be adequately translated into action. It is for such readers that the *Modern Churchman's Library* is intended. The writers of these volumes will all be practising members of the Church of England, who accept the main results of recent criticism, whether scientific, historical, or literary. Trained scholars and thinkers, they do not undervalue tradition: but above all they are truth-seekers and desire to be truth-speakers.

HENRY D. A. MAJOR.

COPGROVE RECTORY, HARROGATE,  
*Michaelmas, 1917.*



## PREFACE

THE object of the following pages is to interpret the Church's Sacraments by the light of actual experience. The question asked has been not What did they originally mean? but What do they mean to-day to those who value them most and use them with greatest intelligence? In contemplating the Sacraments from this point of view we can hardly fail to perceive that they embody a principle which has many other exemplifications. Wherever we see material things instinct with spirit, and conveying to the mind a meaning above what their superficial appearance would suggest, we are in the presence of the sacramental principle. If it be true that the doctrine of the Incarnation is weakened when it is separated from the fact of the universal immanence of God in the human soul, it is no less true that the Sacraments lose in greatness when they are viewed apart from the principle of which they are only one illustration.



The book has been written in view of definite needs. The writer in the course of a now lengthened parochial experience, has found the same difficulties reappearing again and again, and the same questions asked by successive generations of young men and women. Large numbers indeed continue to believe that the language of religion is meaningless, or at least that the meaning is no longer recoverable. Some, however, pass beyond this stage and form too hastily the opinion that the words have a meaning, but that it is one which is no longer credible. The writer has had both these classes in mind, and has endeavoured to show that while faith is constantly changing its language, it remains itself constant and invariable.

In the section which deals with the Catechism, the writer's object has been to give some brief notes at the points where he has found that such help is most frequently needed. Anything like a complete exposition would have been impossible within his limits. He has contented himself with indicating to the reader the avenues by which thought on these great subjects may travel with the best hope of reaching its goal. The obligations of the book to previous writers are many and great. Whenever the borrowing

has been conscious, the debt has been acknowledged in a note. Sometimes, however, the debt has been remembered, but the creditor's name has been forgotten.

The little book has been written and is published with the earnest hope that it may remove some of the stones from the way by which the Christian disciple must reach the City which hath foundations, and whose builder and maker is God.





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## THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

THE ordinary vehicle of thought is language. Ideas commonly embody themselves in words, spoken or written. Conversation and literature are the usual channels by which men communicate what is in their minds and reveal their inmost selves.

Thought, however, has many other forms of expression. Silence is often eloquent, and conveys meanings which range from profound veneration to utter contempt. We are silent when we think that speech would be presumptuous, silent too when we regard the word spoken or the thing done as unworthy of notice. The utterances of a sovereign are heard in silence, and so are the trivial irrelevancies of everyday speech.

The soul again often speaks through the face without the aid of articulate words. Grief, rapture, terror, surprise become their own revealers.

There is thus an unspoken language which discharges many great functions. By it the messages of the natural world are carried to the heart and the mind. The Psalmist heard one day telling another and one night certifying



another of the Divine Glory "declared" by the star-sown heavens. And modern poetry is largely occupied with the interpretation of these unspoken messages. The poet endeavours to translate into written language the voices of earth and sea and sky.

Besides the various suggestions conveyed by Nature's separate moods, or by her individual sights and sounds, the entire spectacle she presents speaks to the seeing eye and the hearing ear of something beyond itself, of which the external world is at once the veil and the revelation. Each age has put its own interpretation upon the majestic spectacle, but all have owned the revealing power of Nature. To the poet of the eighteenth century the spacious firmament on high with its countless constellations spoke of the reason which he so greatly revered:

"What though in solemn silence all  
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;  
What though nor real voice nor sound  
Amid their radiant orbs be found;  
In reason's ear they all rejoice  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
For ever singing as they shine,  
'The hand that made us is Divine.'"<sup>\*</sup>

To more imaginative centuries the external world has spoken of a God who revealed Himself through its endless variety rather than of one who had originally called it into being and who now contemplated it as a spectator. So

<sup>\*</sup> Addison, "The spacious firmament on high."

Wordsworth, as he looked at the scenery of the Wye, was conscious of something far more deeply interfused—

“ Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky and in the mind of man,”

while to Goethe Nature was the living garment of Deity—

“ In Being’s floods, in Action’s storm,  
I walk and work, above, beneath,  
Work and weave in endless motion !  
Birth and Death,  
An infinite ocean ;  
A seizing and giving  
The fire of Living :  
'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,  
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by.”\*

In all these cases we see inanimate things conveying to the mind a meaning which intrinsically belongs to them, and which they have by their own right. An object may, however, speak to the heart and the imagination by virtue of its associations. It may come to mean more than, apart from these associations, it would at all suggest. It links itself with men’s remembrances and affections, and thus speaks in their hearing the language of hope and promise, or it may be of shame and terror. The stones which Joshua directed to be placed in the bed of the Jordan to commemorate the crossing of the river by the Israelites, the soldier’s flag, the

\* Song of the Earth-Spirit in *Faust* as translated by Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.

wedding-ring, the memento or keepsake of private life may illustrate this significance imparted to lifeless things by the associations with which men, consciously or unconsciously, invest them.

Of these associations none are so strong as those which we call religious. The sacred emblem has a hold upon the heart which no others possess. Dearest of all to men are their religious symbols, the church, the altar, the likeness, sculptured or painted, of the venerated dead.

From the very beginnings of Christian history two rites have thus carried to the soul of the believer the distinctive calls and consolations of Christ. Some of the commonest of material things are here made the mouthpieces of a Divine communication, the transmitters of a heavenly voice. We call these rites sacraments according to the definition of the Catechism by which a sacrament is explained as "an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace, ordained by Christ" as a means by which the grace is received and a pledge to assure us of its presence. In both we see spirit shining through matter, body lit up by an indwelling soul.

The material things chosen for the exalted purpose they are here made to serve are among the commonest of God's creatures. Water drops down from heaven unsought, and springs unbidden from every hillside. Nor was any table in Palestine in the days of Christ so poor but

on it might be seen bread and wine. These constitute the matter of the Christian Sacraments.

Nor is the "inward grace" to which the sign points, or which it conveys, remote or mysterious. An observer who saw the two rites for the first time might be led by the form to the meaning beneath.

Let us picture a baptism such as is described in the Gospel, when the conscience-smitten inhabitants of Judæa submitted to the baptism of John in the Jordan confessing their sins. What meets the eye is a sign of what takes place within the soul. The penitent descends into the river, his body stained by the dust of travel or the sweat of toil. The plunge beneath the water removes the defilements he has contracted, and he rises up fresh and clean. A corresponding change has been effected within the inner man by his own desire to escape from the disabling past, and the assurance of pardon conveyed to him by the rite to which he now submits. The cleansing water becomes to him the vehicle of that Divine forgiveness, which can alone cleanse the soul from its stains. He rises from the water eager for the new and better life that opens out before him, the unspoiled page waiting for him to write upon it.

The interpretation of the other Christian sign presents no greater difficulty. The "matter" which is here charged with sacramental power consists of two common articles of food, the bread which we call the staff of life, and the wine which maketh glad the heart of man. Men



and women approach the table thus furnished, and in an attitude of prayer or worship eat and drink of the bread and wine. We are thus led at once to think of some sustenance of the soul, which the material feast symbolizes or conveys. Without historical knowledge we should not be able to proceed further in our interpretation. We must recall the earthly life of Him whose name recurs so often in the prayers by which the feast is accompanied, and there we find Him representing Himself as the spiritual food of His disciples. The emphatic language in which the Catechism declares that "the Body and Blood of Christ are indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper" is intended to prevent us from regarding this Supper as a commemoration only. Those who join in the feast with full knowledge of its meaning, and earnest response to its call, are not merely onlookers or spectators. They desire to unite themselves "verily and indeed" with the object of their worship. What is intended is an association of man with God, or indwelling of God in man, which may be actually experienced, but can only be dimly shadowed forth in the language of metaphor and symbol.

The other rite which will come before us in these pages has the same sacramental character as the two already mentioned. In Confirmation we see for the most part young persons, on the threshold of manhood or womanhood, kneeling before one of the Church's Chief Ministers while he lays his hand in blessing upon their heads.

The meaning of the act is disclosed in a prayer which follows, and in which the hand visible to our eyes is made the symbol of that invisible hand of God with which He ever protects and guides His children :

*"We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these Thy servants, upon whom (after the example of Thy holy apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of Thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let Thy fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over them : let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with them ; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life."*

Like Baptism and the Lord's Supper, Confirmation impresses us by the simplicity and appropriateness of its symbolism. We hear a promise made at the outset of mature life to be true to obligations entered into vicariously before the awakening of reason. An assurance is then conveyed to us that the promise thus made with honest intention, but necessarily imperfect knowledge of what it involves, has not passed into the empty air, but has been registered and accepted by the hearer and answerer of prayer. We do not, however, give to this rite, sacramental though it be, the name of sacrament because we are not able to claim for it, as clearly as can be done in the case of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sanction of Christ. Its beginnings cannot be traced beyond the age which followed His death.

It is the object of this volume to interpret

the language of these three rites, and examine the appeals they make to the heart and the conscience. To do this it will be necessary to say something of their origin and early history. It should, however, be borne in mind that the key to their meaning is not to be found in their first beginnings. The explanation of anything which has lived and grown must not be sought in its first form. The tree cannot be explained by a study of the seed. A man cannot be understood by attempting to squeeze him back into his cradle. It is often more useful to ask what a thing points to than to ask how it began. The sacraments we are about to consider have gathered to themselves an ever-increasing weight of meaning and power from the faith and devotion, which during so many ages they have expressed and strengthened. They do indeed point backwards towards their simple beginnings. They also point onwards to the great realities, which, as they gain in power, they increasingly but never fully reveal.

I

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION  
THEIR ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE





## BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

### THEIR ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE

THE institutions of the Christian Church have grown from seeds planted by Christ. It was not that He created these institutions as a man founds a school or creates an army, first setting the object distinctly before him, and then proceeding to give effect to his intentions. Our Lord was not in this sense a creator, but in what is perhaps a still higher one. The whole Church, with its beliefs and practices, grew spontaneously from His words and example. His words have not passed away because they have passed into the customs and laws and institutions to which they have given rise.

Baptism, as an initiatory rite, was familiar to the Jews when Christ began His ministry. The cleansing properties of water have brought it from remote times into the service of religion. The defilements of the flesh have suggested the more tenacious stains of sin. The actual purification effected by the water soon came to be unheeded beside the spiritual gains attached to its ceremonial use. The object of the numerous ablutions prescribed by the Mosaic Law was

the removal, not of dirt, but of ceremonial uncleanness. Contact with certain material things was regarded as making a man ceremonially unclean, and unfit to enter the Temple precincts. This uncleanness was contagious. Any one who had contracted it made every person or thing he touched unclean. In the procedure prescribed by the Law for the removal of this uncleanness ablutions took a prominent place. Thus when we read in the Gospel (*Mark vii. 3, 4*) that "the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders" we must not think of these ablutions as prompted by the regard for personal cleanliness, but by the fear of some ceremonial defilement which might unwittingly have been contracted.

It is an easy step from these ablutions to the total immersion of the body when a new faith is embraced, or a new confraternity joined. It appears to have been customary in the time of Christ to baptize as well as circumcise proselytes on their admission into the Jewish Church.\* Such baptism would readily suggest itself as a way of removing that entire uncleanness by which the heathen proselyte, previous to his reception, would be defiled.

The forerunner of Christ gave to the baptism of proselytes already practised by his countrymen a greatly increased significance. Baptism as administered by him was a purification not

\* Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, iii. 130-132. German edition.

from ceremonial but from moral impurity. Its pre-requisite was heartfelt repentance. It was a baptism for the "remission of sins." The rite was thus lifted above formalism and a character imparted to it which fitted it to become the entrance-gate into the Christian society.

Christian baptism was only instituted after the Resurrection. We do indeed read of the disciples of Jesus baptizing during the Master's lifetime, but the evangelist who records the fact tells us that the rite was not administered by the Lord Himself (*John iv. 2*). Jesus, however, had submitted to baptism at John's hands, and it was natural for the disciples, some of whom had been followers of John, to adopt the rite to which the Lord had Himself conformed, as the mode of initiation into the infant Church.

The Baptism of Christ is contrasted with that of His forerunner as a baptism with the Holy Spirit, whereas that of John had been with water (*Mark i. 8*).

The distinction points to the change experienced by those who became disciples of the Crucified, and accepted the Church's baptism with a full consciousness of what it meant and involved. Such persons were not only released from the burden of past sin, they also felt within them the energies of that Divine Life with which they had been brought into fellowship. They had become "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. They had been born "again." We can of course only expect to find this happy experience



repeated in the case of those who consciously turn, as the first believers did, from the world to God. When we speak of "the regeneration" of infants in Baptism we can only mean that they are brought within the reach of those influences whose nature it is to effect such conversion.

From the birthday of the Church onwards we find baptism practised as the mode of initiation into the Christian society. On the day of Pentecost those that "received the word" of Peter "were baptized," and it is added that the new converts on that day amounted to about three thousand souls (*Acts ii. 41*). The people of Samaria, convinced by the preaching of Philip, were baptized, both men and women, and among them there is specially mentioned Simon the Sorcerer (*Acts viii. 36*). In this case the gift of the Spirit did not accompany baptism, but followed afterwards, on the arrival of the two Apostles Peter and John from Jerusalem (*viii. 17*). The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized at once, on his own request, by Philip after the Evangelist had preached to him Jesus (*viii. 35, 36*). Saul was baptized in Damascus by Ananias (*ix. 18*). The heathen centurion Cornelius and all with him in the house who heard the word of Peter were baptized in the name of Jesus (*x. 48*). Here the gift of the Holy Ghost preceded baptism, and it was on the ground that this gift had already been bestowed that the Apostle felt unable to "forbid the water" (*x. 47*). Lydia and her household in Philippi, giving heed to the

things spoken by Paul, were baptized (*xvi.* 15). The gaoler in the same town, "and all his," were baptized immediately, in the middle of the night (*xvi.* 33). Certain disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, and who had already received the baptism of John, but who did not know whether "the Holy Ghost" had been "given" were baptized afresh by the Apostle "into the name of the Lord Jesus" (*xix.* 5).

These passages show that baptism was recognized from the outset as the initiatory rite by which both Jews and Gentiles were admitted into the Church. In any of these cases in which the baptismal formula is mentioned it is either *in the name of Jesus Christ* or *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. The former expression is used in *Acts ii.* 38; *x.* 34; the latter in *Acts viii.* 16; *xix.* 5. The formula should be translated as above, for, although the Greek preposition most often used is εἰς and not ἐν, "the interchangeability of the two prepositions in late Greek may be plentifully illustrated from the New Testament."\*

We may, therefore, conclude that when the earliest converts were baptized the words actually used were those given above, and implied an acceptance on their part of Jesus as Lord and Christ. Later the baptismal formula was enlarged into the one we still use: "*I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*" This expanded form, or one substantially equivalent, is found

\* See article on Baptism in *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

in the description of baptism given by Justin Martyr about the middle of the second century. It occurs again in Tertullian some forty years later. In the early treatise known as the *Didache* (probably not later than 130 A.D.) the threefold formula is again enjoined, and the direction given that there shall be a triple immersion or aspersion: "But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things (*i.e.* the teachings previously described) baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (*i.e.* running) water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able." The early sanction here given to the practice of pouring water upon the head, even in the case of adults, is worthy of note. The constant recurrence, however, of the shorter baptismal formula (*in the name of Jesus or of the Lord Jesus*) throughout the *Acts* leaves us in little doubt that it was the one first used. In the words reported by the first evangelist (*Matt. xxviii. 19, 20*), he is probably not thinking of recording the exact words of the risen Christ, but is transferring to Him the familiar phraseology of his own time and locality.

The early history of baptism thus indicates that the rite was universally recognized,

in the Church's first days, as the outward sign of that radical spiritual change effected in a man, whether Jew or Gentile, when he professed himself a disciple of the Crucified, and was admitted within the Christian society. It probably did not occur to any of these early converts to separate the sign from the thing signified. Both would stand in their minds as parts of the transformation wrought in their heart and lives by their conversion. They would not balance the comparative efficacy of "water" and "spirit."

The conversation with Nicodemus (*St. John iii.*) has the same anticipatory character which belongs to the discourse upon the bread of life in the sixth chapter of the same Gospel. It does for baptism what the later chapter does for the eucharist. The Divine speaker assures His visitor that except a man be "born anew" or "from above" he cannot see the kingdom of God. He then makes His meaning more explicit by adding, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The two experiences are regarded as parts of one process. The convert baptized into Christ is as if born into a new world. He measures life by a new rule. A new set of values, as we should say, displaces those he has hitherto used. Nor is the apparent capriciousness of this new birth to be marvelled at, for the spirit does not take its direction from any human agency, but is given or withheld as God pleases. This Spirit is like the wind and can only be



known by its effects. Just as the wind reveals itself by the swaying trees and the disturbed waters, so the presence of the "spirit" showed itself at first in the "tongues" and "prophesyings" of which we read in the *Acts*, but afterwards, when primitive enthusiasm had subsided, in the permanent fruits of Christian character enumerated by St. Paul (*Gal. v. 22*).

Nothing is said in the New Testament as to the age of those admitted into the Church by baptism. We are consequently ignorant how soon infant baptism became the Church's normal procedure. Probably the practice became more frequent year by year until it became the regular custom. St. Paul (*Col. ii. 11, 12*) seems to regard Christian baptism as supplanting and "fulfilling" the circumcision of the Jewish Church. As Jewish children were circumcised on the eighth day, and thus brought in infancy within the holy people, it might well have seemed to Christian parents that an equally early admission to the "Israel of God" was to be desired for their children. Nor is it easy to suppose, when we read (*Acts xvi. 15-33*; *1 Cor. i. 16*) of the baptism of entire households, that young children would be excluded from a privilege to which all the other members of the family were admitted. When St. Paul (*1 Cor. vii. 14*) traces the "holiness" of children in God's sight to the Christian faith of one or other of their parents, he cannot be taken to imply that the children had not been baptized. The gracious words, too, in which Christ commanded the children to be brought

to Him, and blamed those that would have kept them from Him, might well seem to forbid delay in placing children under the shelter of His Church's care.

On the other hand, many persons, illustrious in the Church's annals, may be named, who, although they were of Christian parentage, came to baptism only in maturity.\*

In any case from the fifth century onwards it had become the universal custom to bring children to baptism soon after birth. The establishment of this custom as the Church's ordinary practice tended to intensify dangers to which Christians had, from the beginning been exposed. St. Paul found it necessary to warn his readers (*Rom. vi. 3*) that the baptismal waters had no magical efficacy. Baptism was not, apart from "newness of life," a safeguard against sin, or a pledge of salvation. He had a similar danger in view when he told the Corinthians (*1 Cor. x. 2 ff.*) that although all the Israelites in the wilderness had been "baptized into Moses," yet "with most of them God was not well pleased." We can readily understand that some Gentile converts might be led by their familiarity with the Greek mystery religions to form unethetical conceptions of Christian baptism, and to attribute magical power to the water employed in its administration.

These conceptions would be stimulated when infant baptism had become the Church's

\* Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Augustine, Ambrose. See Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 22.

established practice, and the reason and will of the baptized could not possibly participate in the rite. And as baptism was administered but once, it might readily seem as if the forgiveness, of which it was the pledge, could not again be recovered, were it once to be forfeited. Thus we hear of persons like the Emperor Constantine deferring baptism until death seemed to be imminent lest they should again stain their baptismal purity. On the other hand, infant baptism might readily convey the suggestion that the unbaptized were excluded from the kingdom of heaven, a doctrine to which the Church of Rome is still committed.\* It is well known that this sinister assumption owed its wide-spread acceptance to the influence of one of the Church's greatest teachers. The logical intellect of Augustine refused to evade the consequences of his principles whatever those consequences might be. It seemed to him, with his experience of the world, impossible to escape the conclusion that in humanity, tainted by sin and tortured by suffering, he saw a race under a Divine curse. The whole world in his eyes lay in wickedness, the prey of sin and death. The Church visible was a small company saved from the destiny to which their race was condemned. Baptism, if followed by perseverance

\* "Infants dying unbaptized are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, although, according to the opinion now universally held, they do not undergo suffering of any kind in the next world." Addis and Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, Art. *Baptism*.

was thus as the seal in the Apocalypse by which the followers of the Lamb were protected from the impending doom, or the Ark of Noah by which they were delivered from a drowning world. The baptized alone, if they continued in grace, were saved. For the unbaptized no doom was possible except that of eternal fire. From this appalling conclusion he did not shrink. Through his influence it reached the position of an opinion, which no one during a succession of centuries dared to question. Gradually the protests of conscience began to make themselves heard, and some shadowy *limbus* was imagined in which the souls of the unbaptized might remain, excluded from heaven, but untouched by the sufferings of hell.

“ There, as it seemed to me from listening,  
Were lamentations none, but only sighs  
That tremble made the everlasting air.  
And this arose from sorrow without torment,  
Which the crowds had that many were and great,  
Of infants, and of women, and of men.” \*

Such a belief could hardly have gained this general credence, while adult baptism continued to be of frequent occurrence. The theory would have broken down before the testimony of experience.

A more important result of the practical cessation of adult baptism was the separation which then became necessary between Baptism and Confirmation. As long as persons of mature

\* Dante, *Inferno*, iv. Longfellow's Translation.



age only were admitted to baptism they could, of course, give an account of their faith before they descended into the water. That it was from the beginning customary to make such a profession, we gather from the narrative of the first recorded Christian baptism. A very early addition to the text of *Acts viii. 37* reports the conversation between Philip and the eunuch about to be baptised. It runs as follows: "And Philip said" (*i.e.* in answer to the eunuch's question, What doth hinder me to be baptized?), "'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.' And he" (*i.e.* the eunuch) "answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" The absence of the above words from the oldest MSS. prevents us from regarding them as a part of the original text of the Acts. They are, however, a strong evidence that it had become customary, at the early date of their insertion, to make a confession of faith previous to baptism. The absence of such a confession in the text he was copying would appear strange to the copyist, who would thereupon proceed, as copyists often did, to repair what he felt to be an undesigned omission. We shall see, when we come to speak of the Creeds, that these baptismal professions were the germs of our existing Creeds.

Meantime it is enough to observe that such questions and answers were impossible in the case of young children. Hence it became necessary to postpone them until the child could "be taught" and "be able to learn" what Christian

discipleship meant, the privileges to which it gave access, and the obligations it imposed.

Thus baptism, as we now practise it, may be looked upon as a sacrament which has not been fully completed until the baptized person has made that public and intelligent confession of his faith which a child cannot make. In the earliest ages no division between the two acts was necessary, for reason and conscience had already awakened before baptism was administered. Now we can hardly regard baptism in infancy as complete until it has been followed by some public and individual acknowledgment of Christian discipleship.

Some other incidents in the history of baptism deserve to be noticed:

During the ages of persecution it was customary, even in the case of adults, to require sponsors or sureties for the sincerity of the person to be baptized. Security was thus taken against the danger of his subsequent apostasy or his return to ways of life which he had repudiated. These sponsors undertook, in the case of children, to train up the child in godly living, and answered the baptismal questions in his name. When infant baptism became the ordinary practice parents at first often, although not, as it would seem, invariably, brought their own children to the font, and acted as their godparents.\*

Human life was, however, shorter and more

\* See the quotation from Augustine in the Article *Sponsors* in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

precarious then than it is in our more settled societies. Moreover, while persecution continued, the danger had always to be reckoned with that a child's parents might fall away from the faith. So it seemed good to create for the child a new set of relationships which would survive the rupture by death or apostasy of the ties of blood. The retention of the custom may perhaps still be justified where the child's parents have many friends. Often, however, it is impossible to find sponsors for the children who need them most. Much embarrassment and irreverence are thus occasioned in poor neighbourhoods. In the next revision of the Prayer-Book we may confidently look forward to a modification of the rubric regarding sponsors. Meantime few clergymen would think of refusing baptism to a child for whom no sponsors could be found. Still less would he hesitate to accept the child's parents as sponsors.

Our present practice, however, creates serious difficulties, and is open to grave objections. Sponsors were originally carefully chosen, and important duties were laid upon them. They had to see that the adult or child whom they brought to the font should understand or learn what Christian discipleship was. It was the remembrance of this primitive obligation which caused the authors of our Liturgy to remind a child's sponsors that "it is their parts and duties to see that the child shall be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession" he has made by

them. By whom is the duty thus earnestly pointed to now actually discharged? Religious instruction may be given to a child at church, in school, and at home. It would be beyond the scope of this book to examine the religious education of children in school and in their own homes. We must confine ourselves to the teaching for which the Church is directly responsible, the preparation of children for Confirmation. And here we can hardly think that the Church of England makes any adequate use of a golden opportunity. Such preparation extends in the Lutheran Churches of the continent throughout a period of at least two years, as it does, I believe, in the Church of Scotland. With us it is commonly comprehended within six short lessons, which often aim rather at exhortation than instruction. When we remember the part which the understanding may have to play, in the child's future, in solving doubts and overcoming scruples, the nightmares it may be called upon to dissipate, the sophistries that may be given it to unravel, it may well seem amazing that an opportunity so priceless should be allowed to pass so lightly by. "There is no solemnity," said a prophetic voice now still, "so deep to a rightly thinking creature as that of dawn. Fix the Latin sense of the word *solemn*, viz. that which occurs but once, well in your mind, and remember that every day of your early life is ordaining irrevocably, for good or evil, the custom and practice of your soul; ordaining either sacred customs of dear and lovely



recurrence, or trenching deeper and deeper the furrows for seed of sorrow." \* Knowledge alone cannot, indeed, make any one a disciple of the Crucified. It is difficult, however, to acquiesce in a state of things in which large numbers of persons who have been brought to Christ in childhood remain afterwards in complete ignorance both of what He said and did. Such ignorance is unhappily no uncommon feature of English life to-day, both among rich and poor. If it continues we shall have to contemplate the existence in our midst of a Christianity untouched by any knowledge of the historical Christ.

Let us, however, take what precautions we may, the Church visible will never perfectly correspond with its heavenly pattern. It must be ever remembered that its members are only Christians in the making. They are not Christians fully made. No disciple of Christ thinks that "he has attained" or that he is "already perfect." The visible Church is no more than a school for the life-long education of souls in virtuous and godly living. If we call it holy, we must remember that the holiness arises from the surpassing pattern presented to it and not from its attainment. Christians are *called* to be holy. Their response to the call is sometimes so whole-hearted that those who make it win or deserve the praise of saints. More often it is weak and hesitating. But in no case is it so full and complete that a still better answer could not

\* Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*.

be imagined. The mark of imperfection is set upon the best we do and are.

The Society of Baptists originated, as is well known, in a desire for the Church's purity. Its founders dreamed, like St. Paul, of a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and thought the inspiring vision might become a reality. With this aim in their minds they determined to return to primitive practice, and defer baptism until the profession of discipleship could be made with a full consciousness of its privileges and obligations. The President of the English Society, however, was obliged recently to admit that such a profession afforded no adequate test of earnestness or sincerity. "Worldliness," he said, had forced its way in among their members and caused a widespread forgetfulness of the Society's original principles.\*

The Church of England feels herself prohibited by the example of Christ from any attempt to inquire into the worthiness of her members. The promise made at Confirmation is the only public profession of faith she requires. She recognizes that the fulfilment of this promise will under all circumstances remain imperfect and incomplete. The sense of sin is for her not a barrier to the Holy Table, but a reason for approaching it. So she meets the distrustful communicant with the consoling assurance

\* Speech of the President of the Baptist Union, *The Times*, May 2, 1917.

that "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*"

If we now turn from the form of baptism to its spirit we find it regarded in Scripture as the emblem of three vital truths.

1. It is an assurance of power to escape from the disablements of the misused past. The cleansing waters speak of that Divine forgiveness by which the stains of sin are effaced. The person who accepts such an assurance is as if "born anew." The possibility of such a "regeneration" is an undeniable fact of experience. The assurance of forgiveness is the renewal of hope. Its denial is the signal for bitterness and despair. In no religion is this truth so emphasized as in the Gospel. It is proclaimed aloud to the Christian at the very outset of his course. The "regeneration" of which baptism is the pledge may be effected suddenly or gradually, by the power of an awakening shock, or the silent influence of some beneficent change in our position or our intimacies. However occasioned, a new birth, as we repeatedly see, may and does take place. Humbly relying upon the Divine forgiveness the soul renews its strength, and dares again to hope. The "rainbow-hues of promise" again show themselves in the sky. With hope comes the courage to endure and the heart to labour. We are saved by baptism, because we are saved by the hope of which baptism is at once the emblem and the instrument.

2. Baptism is again the image of what has often been held to be the central truth of the Gospel—that of life emerging out of death. We shall meet with this truth at a later stage of our progress. Here it must be enough to indicate its wide significance. Within each human breast there are two selves, a lower and a higher. At each of the turning-points in life we hear two voices, each of which tries to silence the other, like the voices in Tennyson's poem. They are unvarying in the demands they make and the pleas they urge. One pleads incessantly for our personal interest and for nothing beyond it. "Why should you trouble to work when you can live without working? Why think of those who are nothing to you and who will never thank you for your trouble? Why expose yourself to any suffering you can avoid or run any risk you can escape?" So this one voice urges with unvarying monotony. The other makes answer that the way so pointed to is the way of death and not of life, that idleness is worse than the hardest toil, and isolation to be dreaded still more than the bitterest disappointments or the most painful failures. If we question experience, we conclude without much hesitation that the last voice has the best of the argument. There is no real happiness apart from self-conquest. The only worthy life is found in the midst of the labours and risks and sufferings, which a regard for our own personal welfare would lead us to avoid. The happiness for which the lower self pleads is an illusion.



The personal life must be forgotten, "lost" in one which is larger and deeper. This was the Apostle's meaning when he asked his readers, whether they were ignorant that all who had been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.\* The plunge into the water's depths suggested the death of the old self with its fallacious hopes and dangerous promptings. The reappearance into the light of day spoke of the new life to which such death must be the avenue or the gate.

3. Thus we reach the last truth of which it is necessary to speak, and which is indeed involved in the one we have just been considering. Many early customs of great suggestiveness which once accompanied the administration of baptism have long since fallen into complete disuse. One of these was the delivery to the newly baptized person as he came up out of the water of a white robe to symbolize the Christ-like life of stainless purity to which he had pledged himself. He had been baptized "in the name" of Jesus Christ. Christ was henceforth to be his leader and his example. He was to die to sin and live to righteousness, as has been above described, even as Christ died and rose again. His life was to be one of duty and service as the life of Christ had been, and if in the fulfilment of this service the sacrifice of his present being was required of him, as it had been required of his Master, he was to make the sacrifice without hesitation or

\* Rom. vi. 3.

fear. So those who now bring a child to the font are bidden to remember always "that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness."



II  
THE CATECHISM





## THE CATECHISM

### § THE CONSEQUENCES OF BAPTISM

THE understanding, the will, and the affections, have their distinct places in the religious life of man. It is by the help of the understanding we learn what God would have us to do. By the exercise of the will we actually do His bidding, while the affections enable us at last to love Him above all things, and to find our highest happiness in His service. We need not attempt to settle the relative importance of these three elements in our composite nature. Without students and teachers the Church would fall into the lethargy of unreasoning habit. Without men of action no evil custom would ever be corrected. While if there were no Marys who sat at the feet of Jesus, we should not perceive the surpassing excellence of love.

The aim of the Catechism is to show to those on the threshold of manhood or womanhood the privileges and obligations of Christian discipleship. Few sections of the Prayer-Book have been composed with greater care, or will better repay close study. In the first of its two main divisions (the section dealing with the Sacraments has already come under our notice)

the Baptismal professions are treated in succession under the heads of renunciation, faith, and obedience. The negative and the positive obligations of the Christian are thus presented in their traditional order. In the Church's early days the convert, first, facing west, renounced the works of darkness. He then, turning towards the east, took the oath (*sacramentum*), or pledge of fidelity to Christ.

Before dealing with these three promises a few words may be said upon the consequences of Baptism as set forth in the Catechism. These are threefold. The baptized person "is made," in his baptism :

1. *A member of Christ.* He is admitted into the society which the Apostle describes as the Body of Christ. The energies which proceed from Christ, and which are only felt in their fullness by those who share in the corporate life of His disciples, pass into the life of the baptized person. Henceforth he breathes the air of Christian purity and hope. Influences radiating from Christ surround his cradle, and multiply as year follows year. He has thus been incorporated even in infancy into a larger family than that created by blood-relationship.

2. *A child of God.* Man is not by nature at home in the world. He is haunted by fears and tormented by scruples. Darkness and solitude terrify him. He is moreover in need of guidance. He is often uncertain as to how he should act, and makes mistakes of which he may afterwards bitterly repent. Admitted into the Christian

society he learns to look up to God with filial love and confidence. The Spirit of Christ descends into his heart, and gives him the sense of security which a child has in his father's house.

3. An *inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*. He already has a foretaste of this kingdom while he endeavours to do God's will and to keep His commandments, and he trusts the prophecy thus given him of a union with Christ and with those he loves which shall become more intimate as he grows in wisdom and stature, and which shall reach beyond the limits of his earthly life.

We may now proceed to examine in succession the three baptismal promises of renunciation, faith, and obedience.

## § THE BAPTISMAL PROMISES

### *Renunciation*

In the early Church the candidate for baptism, standing with his face towards the setting sun, was bidden to stretch forth his hand, and with a gesture of repulsion, to renounce Satan, "his works," "his pomp," and "his worship."

The promise thus compels us to inquire into the nature of sin.

*Sin.*—In every act of sin we violate our own sense of right. We make a choice which we know we ought not to make. Thus in contemplating an act of sin we may give our chief attention either to the act itself or to the wrong choice from which it proceeded. We may



sweeten the bitter waters of some underground spring either by dealing with the waters as they flow forth on the surface or by endeavouring to reach their unseen source.

Many treatises on the Christian life pay greater heed to the waters than to the spring. And it is indeed true that many sins will be shunned if only their real character be seen, and the consequences to which they lead be understood. They are done in ignorance of their real nature. St. Paul in one of his epistles deals with the sin of lying in this fashion. He urges his readers to speak truth each with his neighbour because they are members one of another. Every false statement, he means, weakens that mutual confidence upon which social life rests. A man finding himself thus deceived begins to distrust every one. He doubts and suspects even where there are no reasons for his suspicion. The recognition of these results of lying will undoubtedly act as a powerful deterrent from the sin. Thus if the various misdeeds forbidden by the ten commandments be examined, the ugliness of these misdeeds will become apparent, and will make their commission distasteful.

This legal fashion of regarding sin as a number of wrong deeds rather than as a warp in the soul derived much support from that view of the Atonement which is associated with the name of Anselm (1033-1109). He was the first to formulate a systematic theory of the effects of Christ's death regarded as a satisfaction or

propitiation for sin. In his treatise: *Why God became Man*,\* he represented sin as a constantly rising debt which man came to owe to the Divine Justice. Every day he lived aggravated the debt. He thus incurred an obligation which he was quite unable to discharge, and which no one but a Being who was at once God and man could pay on his behalf. The ideas of substitution, of innocence suffering for guilt, to which this theory has given rise have formed a legacy which we have not, even yet, succeeded in repudiating.

To regard sin in this external fashion is much as if a physician were to fix his attention upon a patient's symptoms, and forget to think of the disease. We get in this way a superficial, and perhaps a positively misleading conception of sin. For a man may commit no misdeeds which he recognizes as such, and yet he may be more guilty in God's sight than one who is branded, perhaps deservedly, by the world as a sinner. This, indeed, seems to be the very situation contemplated by our Lord in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee had committed no transgressions which he was able to recognize. His conduct, when he reviewed it, gave him only reasons for self-congratulation. But there was a blindness within his soul. The Publican had offended flagrantly, but his soul was unwarped.

\* English Translation by E. S. Prout, Religious Tract Society.

When we examine the Gospels we find that they lay the emphasis, not upon the particular transgressions which men commit, but upon the state of soul from which these proceed. We are bidden to make the tree good, and are assured that, if we do, the fruit will of necessity be good also. We are asked to consider where our "treasure" is, and are told that the heart will inevitably go with the treasure. Nor can it escape us that our Lord's judgments of sin were determined, not by the heinousness of the sin when weighed in the scales of the current public opinion, but by the state of soul of which it was the outcome and the revelation. He promised immediate forgiveness to the fallen woman, although she had sinned grievously, because there was love within her soul,\* while he allowed the young man to go sorrowfully away, although he had kept all the commandments from his youth up.

Our thoughts are thus turned towards the spiritual source of sin, and we inquire why the soul should be thus blinded to its real happiness.

Here the Gospel comes again to our aid, and points towards the most universal source of sin.

This is found in the fact that life is commonly measured by a wrong standard. If I measure cloth by a rule which I believe to be a full yard, but which really falls considerably short of a

\* "*Because she loved much, her sins which are many are forgiven her*" (Luke vii. 47).

yard, then the final-result will obviously be wrong, however accurate in other respects my measurements may be.

Now the lives of men—the Gospel urges—are wrongly judged when they are measured by any conceivable human standard. The rule chosen may be custom or tradition. The question asked may be: "How have men behaved as we actually see them in history? What in actual fact has their conduct been?" And the result so discovered may be accepted as the measure of what is practicable. Or the appeal may be to current fashion: "What is the rule in this or that business or profession?" It may even be to family tradition: "Surely I may be satisfied to follow in the footsteps of venerated parents." These are all finite, earthly standards. If life be measured by any of them, the result, Christ teaches, will be false.

What He urges is that we should put these standards away, and think, not of man, but of God in His unapproachable perfection. He puts before us, not a series of precepts which can be compassed and satisfied, but a goal to which we can, indeed, draw indefinitely nearer, but which we can never reach. He calls upon us to be "perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect," and to count ourselves still as unprofitable servants even when we have done everything which any one could claim of us as a right.

All is obviously changed when this heavenly measure is introduced. The scales which before perhaps were evenly poised shake, and one falls



abruptly. The "missings of the mark," not perceived before, become visible as stains on a garment when it is brought out into the light. The result which before was sufficient is now seen to be woefully insufficient. The sense of sin, in its awakening, cleansing power, penetrates the soul.

The consciousness of sin is thus seen to arise from the soul's very infinity. It is not the result of morbid introspection or disabling self-distrust. It is the call of that "better" which rises continually above the actual "good." It is the voice of the Divine Perfection inviting us to rise and share it. As long as we hear this voice it is well with us, for it will not leave us in our sins. "Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee." It is not the stings of sin we should dread but their cessation. *"If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

It follows from this that sin may be visited by a very real penalty, although it may appear to any outward observer to remain unpunished. The soul itself may have been wounded. The sinner may pass uncondemned by any human judgment. Yet he may not acquit himself. Before that inward Judge, in Whose presence he constantly stands, he knows that he is not guiltless. It is the condemnation of this Judge he fears above all else, because he cannot, do what he will, escape from His Spirit or flee from His Presence.

The Catechism presents to us the solicitations of evil under the forms of the three traditional enemies of the human soul—the *flesh*, the *world*, and the *devil*.

The *flesh* is that bodily nature whose appetites form the chief temptations of primitive man, and which remain sources of danger to the most highly civilized. No wealth of knowledge, nor delicacy of refinement, can put either man or woman beyond the reach of the sins of the flesh. Gluttony, drunkenness, sensual impurity, sloth, anger—for resentment is essentially a physical impulse—are not, as we know, confined to savage races. They are all rampant in the capitals of modern civilization. The impulses to these sins cannot be extinguished by asceticism. The body tortured by asceticism revenges itself. The Apostle says (*Col. ii. 21*) that the ascetic maxim, "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch," has indeed a show of wisdom, but that it is of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. The best safeguard against these sins is the steady remembrance that every offence done to the body—every excess in meat or drink, every sensual uncleanness, or deliberate indulgence in anger—is at the same time a wound inflicted upon the Spirit, a darkening of the light by which we see God and read His Will.

The *world* is most simply conceived as that set of false values proposed to us by current fashion, or by the actual procedure of men.

External rewards—wealth, social position and the like—are thus presented to us as the things of greatest value, and those to which men, whatever they may profess or even think, do really in their hearts attach the greatest importance. And valuable indeed these things are or may be. They are not, however, of so great value that a man would be justified in selling his soul or losing himself for their sake. The judgment of Christ on this point is emphatic, and has behind it the experience of ages: "*What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

*The devil* is the super-sensual being whom the Bible represents as the enemy of God, the hinderer of the Divine purposes, the scatterer of tares among the good seed of the Divine Sower. Great poets—Milton, Goethe, Burns—have laboured to depict his likeness. For us he is the embodiment or impersonation of sin in all its shapes, the tempter from the outside, who allies himself with our own passions and confusions and mistakes to bring us to ruin. He is "the Prince and Chief of many thronèd Powers who led the embattled seraphin to war," but oft-times also, "within the human bosom prying," "unseen he lurks." No visible tempter was needed to present to the pure soul of the Redeemer in the wilderness the deceptive visions of worldly ambition and unsubstantial authority. Nor can we ever allow ourselves to forget the

unseen tempters who come to us through the shapings of circumstance, and even sometimes through the entreaties of love and friendship.\*

### § THE BAPTISMAL PROMISES

#### *Belief*

We are unable rightly to formulate our religious beliefs. Many of them we inherit, and we see no reason ever to call them in question. Our religion is a part of ourselves. It is interwoven with the fibres of the soul. When we attempt to express it verbally, the result is apt to be meagre and unsatisfying.

There are in the New Testament some short summaries of Christian belief in which we may find the germs of the Church's future creeds. Such was the answer of Christ to the question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," He replied, "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (*Luke x. 27*).

Such again was St. Paul's emphatic declaration: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (*Rom. x. 9*).

Such brief summaries formed for many years the Church's only Creeds. No others were

\* In Mark viii. 22 Satan assumes the form of the chief of the apostles to turn the Saviour aside from the way of the Cross.



necessary as long as the likeness of the Saviour stood clear before His disciples, and they expected His speedy return. It was only when this likeness had begun to fade, and Christian faith had become a subject of intellectual questioning, that Creeds became necessary. Christian belief had to be protected from fancies and misrepresentations which threatened its very existence.

We can thus see why the oldest of the Church's Creeds should also be the shortest.

The longer the Person and Work of Christ were studied the more mysterious did He appear, and the more did extravagant opinions regarding Him multiply. Thus Creeds become ever longer as we pass down through the centuries. Of the three Creeds in our Prayer-book we are concerned here only with the shortest and oldest—that of the Apostles.

It will be convenient, first, to give a brief summary of the early history of the Apostles' Creed, then to look at the general contents of the Creed, and finally to add some notes upon its separate articles.

The *early history* of the Creed is long and involved. The following is regarded by the best modern scholars as the probable course of events.

We find in use in the Church of Rome from about 250 A.D. to 450 A.D. a Baptismal Creed which we can write out with almost complete

certainty. It lies before us in a large number of texts, and although none of these is older than the first of the years just mentioned, the Creed had by this date found its way into the service-books and was accepted as the Church's formal confession. It ran as follows :

*" I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord,  
Who was born of the Holy Spirit from Mary  
the Virgin,  
Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and  
buried.  
On the third day rose from the dead,  
Ascended into the heavens, sits at the right  
hand of the Father,  
From thence He will come to judge living and  
dead,  
And in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, the  
remission of sins, the resurrection of the  
flesh."*

It will be seen that this form of belief differs from our present Creed at various points, and especially by being without the clauses which affirm our Lord's *descent into hell, the communion of Saints, and the life everlasting*. We also miss in it the important epithet "*Catholic*" as a designation of the Church.

This short Creed had in Rome, during the period in question, the authority of a document to which the Apostles had given their sanction. As such it was carefully preserved, and guarded from any alteration.

This immunity from change, however, did

not follow it when it began to be carried by Roman missionaries and travellers into other Churches of the West. These Churches allowed themselves the liberty of introducing both modifications and additions into the original Creed. Thus from the end of the *second* century we find a large number of Western Creeds which can be shown to be daughters of the Creed of Rome given above, but which differ from it at various points. Some of these daughter Creeds must have been in existence by the year 200 A.D., and it is not too much to allow a priority in time of at least half a century to the parent Confession. Thus we reach a date not later than 150 A.D. for the origin of the oldest Baptismal Creed of the Church of Rome—that which has been given above.

Of this Confession our present Apostles' Creed must be regarded as one of the daughters. No copy of it older than the year 500 A.D. is known to exist. It was at this date in use in Southern Gaul. It made its way thence into the Frankish Empire, and diffused itself more and more widely as this empire increased. Through the relations of the Carlovingian monarchs (eighth and ninth centuries) with Rome, it gained acceptance within the Imperial City, was invested with the apostolic authority which had protected the earlier confession, and thus became the symbol of Western Christendom.

If we now turn to the *contents* of this Creed we find, that its main object is to enable us

to answer the fundamental question of religion: "How shall I think of God?" "Who or what is He?" Think of Him in some way we must. But our thoughts vary endlessly. We may picture Him as kind or cruel, as partial or just, as caring for the welfare of men or quite indifferent to it. We may think that He cannot be known at all, and that His nature must for ever remain an insoluble enigma. So men have wavered and hesitated as they lifted up their minds, in unceasing speculation, to the Supreme Reality. Why, we may think, did He not put an end to all perplexity by appearing in His own person on the earth? No external vision, however, that we can think of, would have revealed His Nature. Character can only be made known by life.

The Christian answer to this fundamental question points to man at his best as the truest revelation of God. It fixes upon one man to whom humanity owes an immeasurable debt of love and gratitude, as the image and likeness of the invisible God. It clothes the Eternal Father with this human garment and bids us see God in Christ. For us Christ is God in human flesh appearing. Christ brings near to us what without Him remains a remote and bewildering Reality. He is the door opening into the closed heavens. We accept the great declaration: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We recognize the Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of God, the love of Christ as the love of God.



Thus the *three sections* of the Creed follow each other in natural sequence. The *first* treats of God as He is in Himself, and apart from that likeness of Him which we see in Christ Jesus. To the great teachers of the pre-Christian world, Gentile as well as Jewish, He was, as He is here described, the universal Ruler or Disposer, and the Creator of heaven and earth. Many of them, too, gave him the title "Father," although the word had not for them the intimate meaning it has on Christian lips.

In the *second section* we pass to that intervention of God in the affairs of men which in our minds stands out unique and unapproachable. "*I believe,*" we say, "*in Jesus Christ His only Son.*" The word "only" is no doubt intended to recall the expression "only-begotten" in the prologue to St. John's Gospel ("we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father"). We are forbidden by this profound Gospel to restrict our thoughts of Christ to the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. We think of Him as existing before He became flesh, as having been in the beginning with God, and as being the Revealer of the unseen God through the entire course of human history. It thus becomes possible for us to count the many examples of goodness whom we find either in the ages before the Christian era, or in non-Christian lands subsequently, among the unclaimed sheep of the Good Shepherd. The Creed then traces the life of Jesus from the cradle to the Mount of the Ascension. We follow Him into the heavens,

and express our belief that He is there seated in the place of honour, at God's right hand, and that He will hereafter be the Judge of the living and the dead.

In the *last section* we enumerate some of the results of this great intervention. We profess our belief in that spirit of holiness who takes up His abode in the hearts of the disciples of Jesus and guides them into all truth. We then rehearse some of the effects which we trace to this Spirit's agency: the establishment among men of that Catholic Church embracing "all who profess and call themselves Christians"; the fellowship of all who now follow or have ever followed the Lord Jesus in sincerity; the possibility and the reality of forgiveness; and finally the resurrection from death and the life eternal.

We thus see three manifestations of the one Supreme Reality, the first in nature, the second in history, and the third within the soul. One aspect of God is visible to the man of science, another to the historian, and yet another to the student of the spirit's "viewless ways." So the child is taught to sum up his belief as follows:—

*"First I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.*

*"Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.*

*"Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God."*

This important summary deserves our best

attention. We distinguish three "*Persons*" within the Godhead. It must, however, be remembered that the word "person" does not here bear the meaning we attach to it in ordinary speech. If we consult a Latin dictionary we find that the word *persona* meant in the first instance the *mask* through which actors on the ancient stage spoke, and which would, of course, vary in appearance according to the part represented. The word then by a natural transition came to be given to the part or character represented by the actor. It then came to signify a human being who performed any function or played any part in human affairs, and thus gradually acquired the associations which belong to our word "person." When we transfer the word to the Godhead we are lifting it up into a world in which human words become approximations or symbols. It is best, therefore, to abstain from fruitless attempts at exact definition, and simply to recognize the three manifestations of Himself which the one eternal Being has given us in nature, in Christ, and in the human spirit.

The following further elucidations of the first section of the Creed may be here given :

When we confess God to be *almighty* we are attaching to this adjective the sense it bore in the original Greek, viz. '*Disposer of all.*' The word, as we now use it, is suggestive of despotic power arbitrarily used. We do not, however, believe that God ever acts arbitrarily, or that

He is never untrue to Himself, as He would be, *e.g.* if He were to countenance falsehood or to reward wrong-doing. We think that although clouds and darkness may be round about Him, equity and justice are invariably the habitation of His seat.

When we describe him as the *Maker of heaven and earth* we conceive His work in creation rather as a process which still continues than as one single creative act. Indeed it is not possible for us to think of any quite new beginning. There is always something beyond the point at which we start. At the very beginning of *Genesis* there is already in existence a chaotic or shapeless mass which God proceeds to bring into order. The highest conception we can form of the Divine work in nature is to suppose that God is gradually subjecting all things to His purposes, so that the whole earth shall at last be "full of His glory."

The practical consequences of the acknowledgment: "*I believe in God Who hath made me and all the world*" are well stated in the following words of Bishop Creighton: \* "God's peace comes to those only who are content to allow that there is one God, Who made all men, themselves amongst others, but in no other way than others, on no different conditions, and for no different destiny. It comes to those who are content to regard themselves, not as the sole object of creation, but as part of the race of man, who are willing to admit as a practical fact that

\* *University and other Sermons.*



they themselves are not superior to every other created being, that they have no greater claims upon Divine Providence than has he whom they would call the meanest creature, that they are not exceptionally favoured and protected from the evil consequences of follies or weaknesses or selfish indolence. It comes to those who are willing to grant that they are small and insignificant beings in the great scheme of the universe, who are contented to know their true position, their real worth, and who strive to bring themselves within the limits which their knowledge of God and experience of men show to be most fitted for their scope."

In the second section of the Creed we follow our Lord's passage through things temporal until His mediatorial work ceases. The following articles here sometimes present difficulties :

*Born of the Virgin Mary.*—The union of the Divine and the human natures in Christ Jesus is obviously a spiritual and not a material union. Christian belief cannot consequently require us to form any distinct conception of the mode of our Lord's birth. If we are forced to make the circumstances of the Nativity the subject of an historical investigation we must recognize that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth lacks the authority of the earliest tradition. St. Mark is silent on the subject, while the accounts of the first and third evangelists conflict at many points. St. John conceives the union with the Father as existing from "the beginning," and makes no

mention of the Nativity. "The Virgin birth," as Dr. Sanday tells us, "was no part of our Lord's own teaching. The neighbours among whom His early life was passed, the changing crowds who witnessed His miracles or gathered round Him to hear Him, had never had it proclaimed to them. Jesus, son of Joseph, the prophet of Nazareth, was the name by which He was known. . . . The Gospels simply and naturally reflect this language. We may well believe that the language was shared, as the ignorance which caused it was shared, by the Twelve themselves."\* The devout believer, whatever opinion he may himself form on this question, or whether he decline to form any opinion, will deeply resent the suggestion that faith in Christ as God Incarnate must involve a belief upon which our Lord Himself, as far as we know, based no claim, of which the first generation of Christians were in ignorance, and which appears to have had no influence upon the mind of St. Paul.

*He descended into hell.*—This article appears to have been originally inserted in the Creed, not for the purpose of enforcing any doctrine regarding the state of the dead, but in order to emphasize the fact of the Lord's actual death, and to guard against the supposition that He had either swooned upon the Cross or otherwise evaded death. For this reason it was explicitly affirmed that the spirit had actually left the body

\* Article "Jesus Christ" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

and gone into the realms of the departed. ("The oldest interpreters make '*descendit*' equivalent to '*sepultus*'" \*) This seems to be substantially the opinion of Westcott, who says: † "This clause, as we know, has given occasion to much misunderstanding and superstition. It is not found in the earliest creeds, and it is almost peculiar to the West. But it is not on this account less precious as part of our heritage. As it stands it completes our conception of the Lord's death. . . . According to this conception Christ in dying shared to the full our lot. His body was laid in the tomb. His soul passed into that state on which we conceive that our souls shall enter. . . . We cannot be where He has not been. He bore our nature as living: He bore our nature as dead."

*He rose again from the dead.*—We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ rose in spiritual power from the grave, and that He has never ceased, from the first Easter-day onwards, to manifest Himself by undeniable tokens to His disciples, and assure them of His presence with them and His power to save. The mode by which the transition from His earthly to His heavenly life was effected has not been revealed to us, and we refrain from any attempt to conjecture or picture it. We are content to know that the disciples, who on the Friday evening were prostrate by sorrow and disappointment, were raised on Easter-day from this prostration, and were filled

\* Harnack, *Apostle's Creed*, E. T., p. 87.

† *The Historic Faith*, p. 76.

with a confidence which they never again lost. In like manner we ourselves hope to die with Christ to sin and despair, and "pass with him through the grave and gate of death to a joyful resurrection."

*He ascended into heaven.*—"Christ has ascended into the heaven of heavens; Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father; Christ will descend thence to judge the quick and the dead. Where then is Christ at this moment? In some far-off star which sparkles overhead in the midnight sky? . . . Nay we do but perplex ourselves with such idle speculations; we only create difficulties where there are none, by attempting to realize that which, with our present faculties, is unrealizable. . . . This heaven, this sky overhead, in its purity, its calm, its glory, its spaciousness, is only an image—a sublime image indeed, but an image still—of an infinitude which we cannot describe, cannot realize."\*

"While we are constrained to use words of time and space, to speak of going up and coming down, of present and future, in regard to the spirit-world and Christ's glorified life, we must remember that such language belongs to our imperfect conceptions as we now are, and not to the realities themselves . . . that we must allow no conclusions to be drawn as to the eternal from the phenomena of time." †

*He shall come again to judge the quick and the*

\* Lightfoot, *Sermons in St Paul's Cathedral*, p. 157.

† Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 75.



*dead.*—We believe the Divine standard of judgment to be the mind that was in Christ Jesus. We are acceptable in God's sight in as far as we are in heart and mind like Christ. The judgment of which we thus think is even now in progress. We range ourselves by the various decisions we take and the deeds we do with Christ or against Him, among His friends or His enemies. So we rejoice to receive the assurance of the Gospel that those who pass safely through this searching trial shall not come into further judgment, inasmuch as they have already passed from death unto life (*St. John v. 24*).

The *entire work of Christ* is summed up in the Catechism as one of redemption. *I learn to believe in God the Son who hath redeemed me and all the world.*

We see through the chequered annals of mankind two forces striving for supremacy. One is human sin, which brings in its train confusion, disaster, and ruin. The other is an agency, discernible in the midst of the sin, which often makes the sin the instrument of a triumph that otherwise would not have been possible. This last agency is redeeming Love, and of such Love the work of Christ, in His earthly life, is the evidence and manifestation. We see here the tide of human folly and wickedness rising to its full dimensions; while at the same time the tide of Divine Pity rises above the sin and transmutes it. Thus if Caiaphas had not stumbled, and Judas betrayed,

and Pilate temporized, the love of God for an erring race would not have been seen shining from the Cross on Calvary. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." It is to the love so manifested—a love essentially "eternal"—we look for the gradual release of humanity from the burden of its sins.

*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*—When we confess God to be "spirit" (*St. John iv. 24*, margin) we do not mean that He is a phantom or apparition, but that He is of like nature with our own spirits. We thus picture Him, not as a transcendent or "non-natural" man apart from us, but as dwelling within us and associating Himself with our own spirits in intimate but indescribable union. It must be ever borne in mind that the whole fabric of our religion rests upon the thought of God, and that while our conception of Him as a distant Being tends to be dissolved by the analytical processes of the reason, our realization of Him as indwelling spirit tightens its hold upon us, and becomes ever more luminous, as our experience widens and our spiritual life gains in intensity.

*The holy Catholic Church.*—The Church is *holy*, not because it contains none except worthy members—it is as a field in which tares grow together with the wheat—but because it is "called" or summoned to be holy, and because the action of Christ is one of persuasion, and not one of compulsion. The Church is *catholic*

or universal because its dimensions are world-wide. We can assign to it no narrower limits than are suggested by our own Liturgy, where it is regarded as embracing all who profess and call themselves Christians (see the Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men).

*The Communion of Saints.*—Men of honest and good heart form in this present life a spiritual confraternity which shows its reality whenever good and evil appear in unmistakable conflict. The two hosts then gather each round the captain of its choice. "Virtue," says Bishop Butler,\* "is a principle and bond of union amongst all who are endued with it, and known to each other; so that by it a good man cannot but recommend himself to the favour and protection of all virtuous beings throughout the whole universe who can be acquainted with his character, and can in any way interpose in his behalf."

Nor is the fellowship thus formed confined to the living. The blessed dead still live in us, and in God. Apart from us they cannot be made perfect. Apart from them we are poor in memory and incentive. "The Christian Church is the only society in the world in which the dead still live, in which the spirits of the just made perfect can be spoken of, not as former, but as actual members. . . . In it the past and present are all one: the dead yet live; death constitutes no wall of separation; it is but deliverance from the body, a welcome deliverance from weakness, temptation, imperfection. The

\* *Analogy*, Ed. Gladstone, p. 85.

saints are among us and with us; the wise and good of all ages are of our society; they feel with us, suffer with us, sympathize with us, encourage and aid us."\*

*The resurrection of the body.*—"The flesh (for this and not the 'body' is the word in the primitive Creed) of which we speak as destined to a resurrection is not that material substance which we can see and handle, measured by properties of sense. It represents, as far as we now see, ourselves in our actual weakness, but essentially ourselves." "I believe, that is, that all that belongs to the essence of my person, manifested at present in weakness, marred by the results of many failures, limited by the circumstances of earth, will remain through a change which the imagination cannot realize." †

The words, however, of Professor George Adam Smith ‡ should not be forgotten: "It is well for us all sometimes to pitch our religious life in terms which do not include the hope of the future. Most of the crises of religious experience may be achieved, as some of the grandest Psalms fulfil their music, without the echo of one of the far-off bells of heaven. A man may pass through the evangelical experiences of conversion, regeneration, and redemption, without thinking any more of the future than a little child thinks, but only sure and glad that his Father is with him. The Old

\* Mark Pattison, *Sermons*, p. 295.

† Westcott, *The Historic Faith*.

‡ *Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 176.



Testament is of use in reminding us that the hope of immortality is one of the secondary and inferential elements of religious experience."

*The life everlasting.*—It is important to remember that the life here intended is present as well as future. It should begin now. The disciple of Jesus has it as a present possession. "Full surely indeed there lies a blessedness beyond the grave for those who have already entered upon it here, and in no other form or way than that by which they can already enter upon it here, in this moment; but by mere burial man cannot arrive at blessedness—and in the future life, and throughout the whole range of future life, they would seek for happiness as vainly as they have already sought it here, if they were to seek it in aught else than in that which already surrounds them so closely here below that throughout eternity it can never be brought nearer to them—in the Infinite."\*

## § THE BAPTISMAL PROMISES

### *Obedience*

The third baptismal promise is one of obedience. We undertake to keep God's holy will and commandments and to walk in the same all the days of life.

One great obstacle to the fulfilment of this pledge arises from the difficulty often felt of

\* Fichte, *Way to the Blessed Life*, E. T. London, 1849.

knowing what God's will is. The right course is frequently hard to discover. "Experience and reflection," wrote George Tyrrell, "confirm me daily in the conviction that life is less simple than we learnt from our copy-books and catechisms, and that our choices—leastwise those of any moment—are rarely between good and evil, divisible as it were with a hatchet, but rather between courses mixed in varying proportions of both one and the other. The heroes of moral romance sail serenely through life's darkest storms, cheered by the certainty of their faultless rectitude, and by the hearty applause of a thoroughly satisfied conscience. But in real life it seems to me that such serenity and the undoubted force and energy which it secures are the privilege not so much of the heroic as of the unreflective."

We have to remember that this uncertainty is a part of the discipline by which our strength is made perfect. If right were always unmistakably on one side, and wrong on the other, experience would have no educating power. It is the necessity of having to balance opposing claims, to unravel sophistries, to choose between specious and real advantages, which transforms us from children into men.

None the less does the craving for infallible guidance remain. We long for certainty, and try by various expedients to escape from the burden of choice. We do well, indeed, to avail

ourselves of the best human guidance we can find. Generally speaking, we are but partial judges when our own interests are at stake. Others will often see features in our situation which escape our own notice. In the cases in which choice is difficult, and the right way hard to discover, it is a mistake to disdain outside help, and lock up our perplexities within our own breasts. We may often have friends both able and willing to help us if we will only allow them. Hence the wisdom of the words in our Liturgy which advise those who cannot quiet their own consciences "to come to some discreet and learned Minister of God's Word and open their grief." We may easily by a needless reserve accentuate that spiritual loneliness of which so many poets have spoken, and of which we must all be sensible.

Still the responsibility of choice cannot be alienated. We have nothing higher or better than the Divine Spirit speaking through our own deliberate judgment to guide or teach us. We must think and pray, and then act as seems to us best. However disinterested or careful we are, we may still make mistakes, but we shall not go permanently astray, for he who admits his fallibility will be likely to recognize his errors and to repent of his misdeeds.

Some seem to think that they have in conscience that infallible authority for which we all long. No one has, however, an infallible conscience. Something may appear to me to be

right which, if I knew more, I should pronounce to be wrong. I may have no scruples when I ought to have scruples. The business of conscience is not to teach me what is right, but to urge me to do it when I have done my best to discover what it is. And let me be ever so much in earnest in this quest, I may still, through lack of knowledge or infirmity of judgment, make a wrong choice. Conscience must indeed be obeyed because we have no guide that is better. We must not, however, think of it as infallible. If we do we make progress impossible.

The Catechism brings before us the moral law in the shape of those Ten Commandments which have always had, for Jews as well as Christians, a peculiar sanctity and importance. They were believed by Jewish tradition to have been written by the finger of God Himself on two slabs taken from the rocks of Sinai. They formed part of that small primitive nucleus around which the whole Jewish Law, as it had come to be in the time of Christ, gradually gathered.

Our Lord did not repudiate these commandments, or treat them as obsolete. He did, it is true, show that He recognized their inadequacy as a moral standard. For the prohibitions of which they all, with two exceptions, consist, He substituted the positive duties of love towards God, and love towards our neighbour. He declared the whole Law to be comprehended in these two commandments. He also took some of the ten separately, and by bringing motives



and feelings as well as acts within their scope, He greatly enlarged their meaning. But there is no word of His which would suggest that He thought these precepts to be antiquated, and unnecessary for His followers. His great saying concerning the Sabbath is not a protest against Sabbath observance, but a condemnation of that observance when it came into collision with the claims of mercy or with the general welfare of man.

When Christ left the earth the question naturally arose among His first followers as to how far they were still bound by those Mosaic precepts which they had observed from childhood. To this question the emphatic answer of St. Paul was that the entire Mosaic Law was preparatory, and that it had all come to an end on Calvary. He drew no distinction between the moral and the ceremonial portions of the Law. He declared that all its precepts alike—the Ten Commandments no less than the prescriptions regarding sacrifices—had passed away in Christ Jesus.

Although St. Paul, however, spoke thus decisively regarding the obligations of the Jewish Law, he regarded its moral claims as a part of that obedience to which the Christian believer was imperatively called by the unwritten law of Christ. We refrain, he said in effect to his fellow-Christians, from theft, from murder, from adultery, not because Moses bade us, but because such deeds belong to that life of sin to which

we have died, from which we have risen with Christ. The Christian's rule of life is not a series of written precepts. It is an ideal or pattern embodied in the example of His Master.

Thus we shall not think of looking upon the Ten Commandments as a complete exposition of duty. Their negative form would alone warn us against such a mistake. If it is important to know what we should *not* do, what we should do is of still greater importance. It has been well said,\* that "through the entire tissue of our employments there runs a good and a bad. Bishop Butler tells us, for instance, that even of our time there is a portion which is ours, and a portion which is our neighbour's; and if we spend more of it on personal interests than our own share, we are stealing." "The whole complex frame of society is a meshwork of duty woven of living fibre, and the condition of its remaining sound is that every thread of it, of its own free energy, shall do what it ought."

— The Ten Commandments, even when we extend them as Christ has taught us to do, embrace but a small section of the whole field of duty. God's "commandment is exceeding broad," so broad that no area of life lies beyond it. In play no less than in work, while we wait no less than while we move, we are in His Presence, ruled and guarded by His Spirit.

These commandments, however, when we

\* Froude, *Short Studies*, The Book of Job.

interpret them not in the letter but in the spirit, give us much help in studying God's Will. We may divide them, as is done in the two admirable summaries of the Catechism, into the duties we owe to God and those owed to our neighbour. The first group embraces the first four, the other the last six of the commandments.

The following brief notes may show that these commandments have not lost their relevance or their importance.

1. In *the first commandment* we see the most important of all religious duties. This is the recognition of the Divine Will as the one supreme law to which we are always and everywhere in subjection. If we ask why was I born? The answer must be, "I was born that I might do God's Will." \* Various other answers have been given to the question. But they are all fallacious and unsatisfying. Happiness has been said to be our being's end and aim. But we have no claim to any happiness except that which comes from the consciousness that we are doing what God would wish us to do. Many good men seem to have had little happiness but this. Life may be pleasant or painful, easy or arduous. It may be crowned with conspicuous success, or end in what appears to be utter failure. No such test can give us any real evidence of its value. This is determined entirely by the degree in which we put the one Supreme Will foremost, and subordinate every

\* See Hebrews x. 7.

other consideration to it. This will claim our obedience in sickness as well as in health, when we suffer no less than when we act. The Divine Glory may shine from the restricted life of the invalid as well as from the crowded days of the busy workman. This Supreme Will is not hard to discover. It is written on the broad page of history, and in letters equally indelible on the fleshly tablets of the heart. "The word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart that thou shouldst do it."

2. The *prohibition of graven images* was intended to protect the Jews against the sin of idolatry. To prevent them from making unworthy likenesses of God they were forbidden to make images of any sort. Every statue, every picture, not only in churches, but in streets and rooms, is thus a breach of the second commandment in its original sense. No Jew under the Mosaic law would have dared to have such representations.

Before the exile we often hear of images (the teraphim, asherim, etc.), but we never hear of them afterwards. The establishment of the Law at the return from captivity was the end, among the Jews, of all pictures and images sacred and profane. The Christian world has set this commandment aside along with other provisions of the ancient law. But in its spirit it reminds us of a danger by which humanity will always be threatened. This is the danger of supposing that any representation we can



form of God will be worthy of the reality. No man has at any time seen Him. If we wish to represent Him to the imagination we must think of Him as He is revealed in Christ. There we may see the Eternal God, not indeed as the Creator and Ruler of the world, but as its Saviour and Redeemer.

3. *The third commandment* is literally a prohibition of false swearing.\* To take God's name in vain meant originally to use it for an insincere or treacherous oath. The actual words are: "Thou shalt not bring the holy name to anything that is empty or hollow." God will not hold him guiltless who invokes His name or His sanction for any "empty" or worthless cause. He will not excuse the persecutions that have been inflicted, the unrighteous wars that have been waged, and the frauds that have been perpetrated in what has been represented as His interest. No sin or falsehood will be found in the long run to have received His sanction or advanced His purposes.

4. *The fourth commandment* enjoins the cessation of ordinary work on one day in the week. The word "holy" meant originally "consecrated to some sacred purpose," and so withdrawn from ordinary use. In its outward form the precept is now observed by Jews only and not by Christians. Among Gentile Christians the seventh day was never kept as a day of rest. When the

\* See *Matt. v.* 33-37, where this commandment is alluded to, and completed or "fulfilled" by Christ.

Roman Empire became Christian the observance of the Sunday as the special day of worship led gradually to its recognition as a day of rest, and to the interruption upon it of all secular business. Thus we cannot appeal directly to the fourth commandment to justify the observance of Sunday, either as a day of rest or as a day of worship. The Sunday and the Sabbath differ, and have always differed, by their respective places in the week, by the mode of their observance, and by the reasons on which this observance rests. The fourth commandment thus belongs in the letter to the things which have passed away. Interpreted in the spirit it is of eternal importance. It forbids us to think that man was made for work alone. If life is wasted when it is spent in the pursuit of pleasure, so it is misused too when it is wholly absorbed in work. There should be time in it for play, for intellectual interests, for the joys of home, and for the worship of God. And as we need leisure ourselves so we should be careful to make room for it in the lives of those dependent upon us. "Altho' the day of rest," it has been well said, "has been changed from the seventh day to the first day everywhere, nay even had it been further changed as Calvin intended from Sunday to Thursday—had it been yet further changed, as Tyndale the foremost of the English reformers proposed, from the seventh day to the tenth day, there would still remain the solemn obligation, founded, not on the Law of Moses, but on the Law of God in nature, the obligation

of rest and of worship, as long as human nature remains what it is, and as long as the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are eternal are unseen." \*

The *last six commandments* forbid the sins which render social life impossible, which break up families and states, and make human beings bad sons and daughters, bad neighbours, bad citizens, bad servants and masters.

5. The first of them brings before us the duty which forms the basis of all common life, the *obligations of children to their parents*. When these are disregarded the foundations of all social life are undermined. Sometimes children have the opportunity of repaying in after life the heavy debt to their parents which they have incurred in childhood. They may in their turn become the protectors of those by whom they were themselves once protected and equipped for the struggles of life. The solace and support of aged parents have the first claim upon their children's resources. Heaven has few greater blessings than the experience both of parents and children when filial duty becomes a labour of love.

It must, however, be remembered that this is a mutual relationship. If children are to love their parents, parents must earn the love of their children. And the love of children, as all who have to do with them in any capacity know, is

\* Stanley, *Christian Institutions*.

more readily won by encouragement than by repression; by praise than by blame. "Encourage, encourage, encourage," was said by a great preacher to be one of the foremost of duties. Perhaps self-distrust is as common a besetting sin as self-confidence. Children, too, cease to be children more quickly than their elders often suppose. A boy of nineteen has ceased to be as a boy of twelve. Responsibility is a great educator. We must not treat grown men and women who happen to be dependent upon us as if they were children.

6. *The sixth commandment* is explained in the Catechism as an obligation to hurt nobody by word nor deed, and "to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart." This is based upon our Lord's saying that anger is the first step to murder. We must not brood over injuries whether they are real or, as is more often the case, the exaggerations of our own fancy. There is no greater enemy of spiritual peace than the tendency to cherish ill-will, or to be on the lookout for slights and injuries. We must forgive even if we cannot forget, and seek to turn our enemies, if we should be so unfortunate as to have any, into friends.

7. *The seventh commandment* warns us against the worst of sensual sins. No one is beyond the reach of those fleshly lusts which war against the soul. No shipwrecks of human happiness are more complete than those wrought



by sensual passion. "Keep thy heart," said the wise man, "for out of it are the issues of life." Beware of loose talk and of the books which are as poison to the mind.

8. If we would keep *the eighth commandment* we must not only keep our hands from picking and stealing, we must also be careful neither to take nor to keep what we feel is not rightfully ours. We must willingly bear our share of the public burdens, and not leave others whom we look upon as richer than ourselves to fulfil our obligations, and pay our portion. We must be scrupulously honest even to the last farthing of our accounts with master or servant, with employer or employed. We must respect the rights of others, "not only the rights of the poor as against the rich, or the rights of the rich as against the poor, but the rights of all classes against each other."\*

9. *False witness* is the last stage of the liar's progress. But there are many previous stages. The Catechism explains the ninth commandment as a prohibition of "evil speaking, lying, and slandering." We have to avoid evil speaking—unless we are compelled to break silence—even when the evil report is true. In such a case we have to consider whether any good can be done by speech. There are those who delight in any story which reflects discredit upon any person or any institution. Tell them

\* Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 346.

such a story and they are all attention. Such people are only one step removed from bearing false witness. They rejoice when the bad witness they hear is true. And it is very seldom that any report leaves them no worse than it reached them. They add to it something of their own unloveliness. So suspicions are disseminated, and the air of social life poisoned.

10. *To covet* in the simplest sense is to wish for more when we already have as much as we can use. It arises from an exaggerated sense of property. Every kind of wealth may awaken the desire to increase it. Accumulation may easily become an end in itself. This was why Pascal said that it was a woeful day for humanity when a man first said, "This is mine and you shall not touch it." Closely akin to this unreasoning desire for more is the tendency to murmur against our own situation, whatever it be, and to ascribe our failures not to ourselves but to our circumstances. Probably no one finds himself in an ideal situation. But the hardest situation may be transfigured by the willingness to face its difficulties and shoulder its burdens. The pathway of courage is marked out by the Catechism when it tells us that we are not to desire other men's goods but to learn to do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us.

## § PRAYER

The first essential of all true prayer is the realization of God's Presence. Before we can pray we must realize who it is with whom we are about to hold converse. We are communing with One to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hid. Thus the utmost frankness, the complete exposure of our inmost selves, is a condition of real prayer. "Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."

The reason why we pray is that we may learn God's will and submit ourselves to what we see to be His purposes. Any particular request we make is subject to the proviso that the thing asked for should be in accordance with the Divine Will. The prayer of Gethsemane: "*Not My will but Thine be done,*" must be ever in our minds when we pray. It would be better not to pray than to press upon God a wish which we had not subordinated to this provision.

If it should be urged that it seems useless to ask God to do His own will, the objection is best answered by an appeal to experience. Those who pray know the value of prayer. They can bear witness that earnest prayer brings as its certain answer an increase of insight, courage, and hope. As we lift up our souls to God the way we should walk in becomes

more clear, and our own faith and hope are strengthened. It is the sense of these benefits which has made prayer the most universal of religious practices. Wherever we find religion there also prayer is found.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the most important part of prayer was the language in which it is expressed. St. Paul tells us of a real prayer which is voiceless. When he urges the Thessalonians to *pray without ceasing* he plainly does not mean that they should always be uttering verbal supplications. The state of the soul is a more vital element in prayer than the words to which this state gives rise :

“ Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpress’t,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.”

Thus when we speak of prayer we must remember that much more is intended than the spoken or written prayers we repeat either in public or in private. Whenever we realize God’s presence, or act as if He were near, we may truly be said to pray although no words should pass our lips. All work done under “the great Taskmaster’s eye” thus deserves the name of prayer. The monastic saying “*qui laborat orat*” puts no strained or unnatural meaning upon prayer.

“ With eye down dropt, if then this earthly mind  
Speechless remain or speechless e’en depart;  
Nor seek to see—for what of earthly kind  
Can see Thee as Thou art?



“O not unowned, thou shalt unnamed forgive,  
In worldly walks the prayerless heart prepare ;  
And if in work its life it seem to live,  
Shalt make that work be prayer.” \*

Thus a life need not be prayerless although it be not characterized by the habit of formal prayer.

Still the thoughts of the heart are apt to remain vague and ineffective until they receive expression. We never fully know what we mean until we begin to explain our meaning to some one else. If we were to entrust our prayers to silence they might have no more strength than “the early dew or morning cloud which passeth away.” The state of mind in which we make no attempt to fix and crystallize our thoughts comes dangerously near to vacancy. Thus speech becomes a necessity in prayer. Habits of devotion, once they have been acquired, should not be lost. The practice of verbal prayer night and morning is of great value. It is much to stand of set purpose in God’s presence when the day begins and when it closes.

It was to teach His disciples how to pray that our Lord taught them the prayer we call especially His. If we look at the *Lord’s Prayer* as a whole, our first feeling perhaps is one of astonishment at its brevity. When we think of all the requests it might have contained, we marvel that it should be restricted to these few simple petitions. Yet the great needs both of

\* A. H. Clough.

body and soul will be found to be here expressed. Bread to enable us to live, mercy when we sin, protection amidst the stress of temptation, and deliverance from bodily and spiritual harm—these are things of which every day we feel the need. We are struck also by the fact that the prayer contains but one petition for a material blessing—the request for daily bread, and by the subordination of all the personal requests to the three petitions that God's Name may be hallowed, that His kingdom may come, and His will be completely done on earth even as it is in heaven.

The following brief notes on the separate clauses may be added :—

*“Hallowed be Thy Name.”*—This is a request that we may be prevented from thinking or speaking lightly of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. It is not a mark of true piety to introduce the Divine Name freely into ordinary conversation. The tongue may well hesitate before it dares to utter the ineffable word. “It is an awful thing,” Bishop Butler is reported to have said, “to stand in the presence of the Moral Governor of the universe.” Light speech about sacred things is a sign that we do not know of what we are talking.

*“Thy kingdom come.”*—The kingdom for whose coming our Lord bade His disciples pray was that reign of happiness and goodness which He announced to be near when His ministry began,

and which was the subject of a great part of His teaching. On our lips the words are a prayer for the success of all projects and the prosperity of all institutions by which God's beneficent designs may be achieved. We pray that the Church may come ever nearer to the Apostle's great ideal of "a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," that states and nations may be purged of the evils which make for their destruction, and that the authority of truth and goodness may be more and more firmly established within the individual soul. In all these ways the Divine kingdom may come, and the number of its citizens increase.

*"Thy Will be done as in heaven so on earth."*—What we mean by God's Will is the triumph of good over evil. This triumph is, within our present experience, invariably the result of a struggle. Evil and good, sorrow and joy, strive together in inextricable conflict. To pray for the accomplishment of God's will is to look forward to the issue of this conflict, to wait and work for this issue, and for its sake to bear the loss and sorrow essential to its attainment. It is misleading to identify God's Will exclusively, as is often done, with calamity. We must think of God as working with us to overcome the calamity and turn the sorrow into joy. Thus our prayer is that His Will may prevail here as it does in that blessed world where sorrow and sighing have ceased.

*"Give us each day our daily bread."*—The earth

produces more than enough food to feed the human beings who live upon it. Much of this food is, however, wasted, or for some reason fails to reach those who need it. We here pray that no one may go without food either through his own idleness and recklessness, through the cruelty and selfishness of his fellow-men, or through the defects of bad government and mal-administration. The petition is thus one for work, the ability to do it, and its legitimate reward.

*“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”*—One of the distinctive features of the Gospel is its insistence upon the willingness to forgive those who may have injured us. Vindictiveness meets with no mercy from the merciful Christ. We are bidden to forgive our brother until seventy times seven. The servant who forgot the remission of his own debt and took his fellow-servant by the throat, saying: *“Pay me that thou owest,”* aroused the fierce anger of his master. Perhaps no one unwilling to forgive could himself pray to be forgiven. The prayer would on his lips be an empty sound.

*“Lead us not into temptation.”*—Some sins are best combated by avoiding their occasions. No depreciation of “cloistered virtue” should restrain us from avoiding what may be to us occasions of sin. He who is sure of his ability to resist, and so exposes himself freely to



temptation, despises his formidable enemy. The humility which prays, "lead us not into temptation," is a shield when temptation comes :

"'Tis still observed those men most valiant are  
Who are most modest ere they came to war."

"*Deliver us from evil,*" or, as it should perhaps be rendered, "from the evil one." When we go astray may we always have the power to return ! May no misfortune ever rob us of our confidence in God's love ! The worst of spiritual states is that in which hope vanishes. So we pray that when sin overtakes us, as it does the best of men, we may be *delivered* from its grasp and not remain its permanent prisoner.

III  
THE EUCHARIST



## THE EUCHARIST

### § ITS EARLY HISTORY

THE Eucharist is the distinctive act of Christian worship. It belongs to the disciples of Christ, and to them alone. It has no parallel outside the Christian Society. In it we see the whole message of Christ to the world symbolized and presented.

In reverently studying the nature of the Eucharistic Feast let us remember what has already been said in our opening section. No institution or practice which has had a long history can be fully understood by confining our attention to its beginnings. We must bring its entire history within our view. We must think not only of what it originally meant but of what it means to-day. A tree cannot be understood by looking at the seed from which it grew. A musical instrument is best understood when its full music has been heard. The explanation of any movement or process is to be found at the goal rather than at the starting-point.

The circumstances of our Lord's Last Supper are clear and unmistakable. It had been His practice, we gather, throughout His ministry to join with His disciples in common meals, and to



make these meals the symbols of spiritual truths. He was in the habit on these occasions of "*breaking the bread*" and dividing it among His followers as a pledge of their union with Himself and with each other. Thus the two disciples recognized their mysterious companion at Emmaus by His manner of "breaking the bread," although they had not been present at the Last Supper. They identified their Master by words or gestures which they recalled from previous occasions.

The Last Supper was distinguished from these other previous repasts by the moment of its occurrence, and also by the solemn meanings with which it was charged by Christ. Upon the table at which He sat down to meat with the twelve there fell the dark shadow of impending separation and calamity. The death of Jesus had already been determined upon by the Jewish authorities, and the soldiers who were to arrest Him stood awaiting the signal. Thus into the joy which every feast symbolizes and awakens there entered also the sorrow of approaching trial and anxious foreboding. The state of feeling thus occasioned is, as we shall see, significant of the habitual Christian disposition. Christian joy rises out of sorrow which it surmounts but does not extinguish.

As the supper proceeded, the Saviour, taking the bread, which He had previously blessed (*εὐλογήσας*), into His hands broke and gave it to His disciples, saying: "*Take ye: this is My*

*body.*" Then, taking a cup from the table, He blessed (εὐχαριστήσας) and gave it to them, and "they all drank of it. And He said unto them, *This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God*" (Mark xiv. 22-25).

This is the account of the second Evangelist. We have in all four accounts of the Eucharistic words, or "words of consecration" as they came afterwards to be called. The narratives of the first two Evangelists are nearly identical, and obviously represent one and the same tradition. The version of St. Luke contains variations which are of great interest to the New Testament student, but have no doctrinal importance. St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23-29) records the memorable words once more, and says that he received his knowledge of what had taken place "*from the Lord,*" meaning apparently that Christ had taught him, in vision or meditation, the meaning of the whole occurrence. We shall see that the Apostle puts a new interpretation upon the expression, "*This is My body.*" It is also worthy of notice that he, like St. Luke (at least in one reading) places the distribution of the cup after, and not during, the supper.

Before proceeding to the interpretation of these eventful words of Christ, it may be well to follow the Last Supper into the years which immediately succeeded.

In the opening chapters of the *Acts* we find the followers of Jesus joining with their fellow-

citizens, as we might have expected, in the Temple worship. They remained Jews, differing only from their countrymen in accepting Jesus as the Messiah. Thus they continued, as it is said, "stedfastly with one accord in the Temple." In addition to this public worship, however, they practised a religious custom peculiarly their own. "Day by day . . . breaking bread at home they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (*ii.* 46). It is difficult not to see in this custom a perpetuation of those common meals hallowed by the remembrance of the now vanished Master. We cannot tell how the Eucharist, as it afterwards came to be called, was related to these "breakings of bread." The connection at first was unquestionably close and intimate. We find this custom of "breaking bread" pointed to as part of the regular Sunday worship of Christians in a later chapter (*xx.* 7), where the Christians of Troas are described as gathering together in the evening of the first day of the week "to break bread."

Much fuller light is thrown upon the sequence of events by St. Paul's stern rebuke of the abuses which had arisen in Corinth (*1 Cor. xi.* 17-33). We see here that the association of "the Eucharist" with the common meal had become the occasion of grave scandals. The custom by which each member of the Church brought with him a supply of food for himself and his friends had been diverted from its original fraternal

purpose. The well-to-do came abundantly provided and feasted riotously apart, while the poor went hungry away. Fraternity had vanished. Charity had been drowned in the wine-cup. The meal was "*the Lord's Supper*" only in name. To recall his converts to the meaning of the rite they were desecrating the Apostle describes the circumstances of *the last Supper*, and the interpretation of the institutional words then uttered, which he had "received from the Lord." He tells the Corinthians that it was no Lord's Supper they were celebrating, and that they were treating the bread and wine, which ought to have been sacred and memorials of the Lord's death, as if they were ordinary food, the pledges and symbols of no heavenly Presence. We shall return to the Apostle's interpretation in the following section. Here it will be enough to observe the intimate connection between the Eucharist and the common meal to which the passage, written about 56 A.D., bears witness.

We have no evidence of any break in this connection until we pass beyond the period covered by the New Testament. At what precise date "the Eucharist" as we know it detached itself from the common meal, and assumed an independent existence we cannot rightly tell. A complete separation had in any case been effected before the end of the second century.

Thus the early history of this distinctive act of Christian worship, appears to have taken



the following course: "the Eucharist" presents itself to us at first in intimate union with a joint meal of a company of Christian believers: the meal is an evidence of fraternity, and an occasion of charity from the wealthier members towards their poorer brethren: gradually the numbers of believers increase, and a joint repast becomes more and more difficult, and more likely to be abused: a separation of the solemn acts and words of the Saviour from the social meal becomes thus imperative, and the Eucharist appears as a service of the sanctuary, and the centre of Christian worship.

#### § THE INSTITUTIONAL WORDS

*The body of Christ.*—We can well believe that when Christ, taking the bread into His hands, said, *This is My body*, His words would be at once intelligible to His disciples. We cannot suppose that He would utter what He knew would be an enigma. The disciples had probably keys to His meaning, which we no longer possess. The "body of heaven" occurs in a passage in Exodus\* as a synonym for the heaven itself. This analogy would suggest that by "His body" Christ meant Himself in the fulness of His personality. The invitation to eat His body recalls the same striking figure as we find it used by Ezekiel. In one of this prophet's visions a hand presents to him a rolled book, and spreads it out before him. The

\* xxiv. 10. See the Hebrew.

Divine voice bids him eat the book and tell its contents to the house of Israel. "So," he proceeds, *I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat the roll. And He said unto me, Son of Man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.*"\* We find the same strong image in *Rev. x. 9*. Evidently what is meant is a complete appropriation, so that the thing received becomes a part of him who receives it.

Confining our attention to the words "*this is My body*" we find that they receive in the New Testament two different, although by no means contradictory or mutually exclusive, interpretations. One of these is given in the fourth Gospel, and the other by St. Paul in *1 Cor. xi*.

(1) In St. John's Gospel—where the institution of the Eucharist is not recorded—the actual expression "body of Christ" does not occur. We have, however, the same image recurring repeatedly in the discourse on the bread of life in chapter vi., *e.g.* (verse 56), "*He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.*" There can be no doubt that what is here meant is an identification of ourselves with Christ, so that His personality becomes ours. More is intended than a mere following of His example, or an assent to His claims. St. Paul frequently uses the same image. The following are a few out of a large number of similar

\* Ezek. iii. 3.

passages: "*I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. ii. 20). "*Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body*" (2 Cor. iv. 10). "*To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (Phil. i. 21). The figure has passed into our own liturgy, and is used in the prayer of humble access to represent the aim and object of all Eucharistic Communion. We entreat that we may so eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, "*that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.*" Such language should not be dismissed as a mere metaphor or hyperbole. It brings before us the mystery of personality. We know what it is to have some interest so absorbing that in our devotion to it we forget ourselves. We put its success before our own safety. The patriot is willing to die that his country may live. The woman who sucked the poison from her husband's wound had lost all thought of self. Students and investigators count health and even life as cheap in their passion for knowledge. Our Lord makes this willingness to part with everything that the word "self" ordinarily suggests the subject of one of His greatest benedictions. "*He that would save his life,*" He declared, "*shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake the same shall find it.*" We must not suppose the meaning here to be, he that loseth his life in this world shall find it in some world yet to come. The losing and the finding are both present experiences, and the words are a benediction upon those ready to

part with everything they possess, and even with everything they are for Christ's sake, and those interests which Christ represents. Such people may truly be said to have lost themselves in Christ. The walls which surround what we now ordinarily call the self are broken down, and a larger life, from which those walls exclude us, flows freely in. To realize in any degree this experience is to eat the flesh of Christ, to live in Him, or to make one's life the expression of His Spirit. Such is one of the meanings we may allow the invitation: *Take, eat: this is My body*, to convey to us. We may hear Christ calling us to identify ourselves with Him in obedience to God and service to mankind. The contact so intended is between us and Him alone. The union is private and individual. We are led by it, however, in natural transition, to the other meaning put in the New Testament upon the memorable words.

2. *The body of Christ* is interpreted by St. Paul as *Christ's followers* or *disciples* regarded collectively. The image which suggests the interpretation is that of the human body and its separate members. The Apostle employs the image freely, without being careful to keep to one single conception of it, and thus he sometimes represents Christ as the head of the body, and sometimes as its representative or personification. Thus he declares to the Corinthians (1. xii. 27): "*Ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof*," and again in the same chapter (verse 12): "*As the body is one and hath many*



*members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.*" Here Christ is thought of as summing up or representing the entire company of His disciples. On the other hand, in *Ehp. iv. 15*, Christ is pictured as being to His disciples what the head of the human frame is to the limbs.

It is this image which the Apostle has in his mind when he deals with the abuses which profaned the celebrations of the Lord's Supper in Corinth. He denies, as we have seen, that the supper, as the Corinthians celebrated it, at all deserved the name of "the Lord's Supper." It had altogether lost the character of a common or joint repast. Some of those present feasted riotously while others remained hungry. He proceeds to say that those who did not discriminate between the bread and wine of which they here partook and the food of ordinary meals ate and drank to their own judgment or condemnation. "*He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body*" (*1 Cor. xi. 29*). The bread which these Corinthians failed to discriminate from ordinary food plainly represented to the Apostle that mystical body of Christ consisting of His faithful disciples which was being thus violated and wounded.

Taking the *body of Christ* in this sense we observe how the interpretation is suggestive of His own repeated identification of Himself with His disciples and even with the unfortunate

and the sorrowful in general. He declares that He Himself reappears in their persons, that He suffers in their distresses, rejoices in their joys, that He is wounded when they are neglected or slighted, and comforted when they are helped. "*He that receiveth you receiveth Me.*" "*Forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren ye did it unto Me.*" And again, speaking from the realms of light to the persecutor Saul, He asked, "*Why persecutest thou Me?*"

Putting this heavenly meaning upon the expression *body of Christ*, we may find in our entire social life, and especially in our dealings with those who are not able to return our kindnesses, or repay our services, an opportunity of meeting with Christ, and touching Him in sacramental union. This is a table of the Lord which is for ever spread before us, a cup which for ever flows. Where this His body is, there must He be. In ministering to its needs we minister to Him.

*The blood of Christ.* The drinking of blood was an act from which a Jew who lived under the Law would instinctively shrink. The clear command standing on one of the first pages of his history: "*Flesh with the life thereof which is the blood thereof shall ye not eat,*" would deter him. We must accordingly look for something in the words of Christ which would free such an act from that appearance of impiety which to a Jewish mind the prohibition of the Law gave to it. This we find in His association

of it with the conception of a covenant. All our records connect the cup which He handed to His disciples, pronouncing it as He did so to be His blood, with a covenant which He desired to establish: "*This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins*" (Matt. xxvi. 27); "*This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many*" (Mark xiv. 24); "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you*" (Luke xxii. 20); "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood*" (1 Cor. xi. 33). The idea of the "blood" is thus inseparably associated with that of a covenant. The connection is established by the earliest tradition and remains afterwards unbroken.

We must therefore inquire into the part played by the shedding of blood in the covenants or compacts made by primitive men and especially by the early Israelites. We find that it was customary to ratify any such important agreement by the sacrificial slaughter of a victim, and by the actual drinking of the blood by the two contracting parties, or the sprinkling of the blood upon their persons. Robertson Smith,\* whose book, *The Religion of the Semites*, throws a flood of light upon these early religious customs, supposes that the blood was originally actually drunk, and that the rude primitive practice was subsequently softened into the milder form of sprinkling the participants with the blood which formerly they would have

\* *Religion of the Semites*, chap. ix.

consumed. We may suppose that the purpose of this early observance was to bind those joining in it to their engagement by making the god whom they worshipped a witness and a party to their compact.

We read in early Jewish history of a momentous covenant in which the two contracting parties were the Israelite tribes on the one side and Jehovah Himself on the other, and which was thus ratified by the sprinkling of blood. The scene is thus described in *Exodus (xxiv.)*: "*And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled upon the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.*" The terms of the covenant here spoken of were on the one side obedience to the Divine commands, and on the other Jehovah's all-powerful protection.

The words we are studying speak of a *new covenant*, in which the contents of the cup were



to take the place of the blood which in past times had been drunk by the contracting parties or sprinkled upon their persons. There can be little doubt that our Lord calls His own covenant "new" in contrast with the one just described. Nor are we left in any serious doubt as to the nature of this new covenant. It was plainly on the one side an anticipation by Christ of the Messianic kingdom, an assurance of its certain advent, and on the other a pledge by the disciples of fidelity to the Master and mutual love, until this consummation should take place. They united themselves to Him in inseparable union until they should drink with Him "*the new wine of the kingdom of God.*"

The covenant between Christ and His disciples is further described in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is identified with the "new covenant" anticipated by *Jeremiah* (xxxii. 31-34): "*Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it.*" The fidelity of the disciples of Christ to their Master is not an allegiance to written precepts like those of the Mosaic covenant. It is an obedience pressed upon them by their own dearest hopes and affections. In cleaving to Christ and waiting

for His kingdom they are following a law written upon their own hearts (see *Heb. viii. 7-13*).

This covenant, then, Christ, when He uttered the words we are studying, was to ratify on the morrow with His blood. He was about to lay down His life for His friends, to die that He might bring sinful men in penitence to the Divine mercy-seat. He was at once priest and victim, for He laid down His life of Himself. No man took it from Him. Taking the cup into His hands He made the life-blood of the grape which it contained to be the equivalent of the blood He was about to shed, and by inviting the disciples to drink of the cup He made them participators in His new covenant. Such we may reverently conjecture was His meaning.

The transition is thus a most natural one by which the blood of Christ has so often in Christian devotion been identified with His love. For it was love to the unseen Father and to men His brethren which prompted the sacrifice He was now on the point of offering. His love to God was to show itself in obedience even unto death, and His love towards men by the best evidence of such love that He could have given.

Thus in one of the earliest Christian letters outside the New Testament, we find the writer, on his way to martyrdom, saying: "I have no delight in the food of corruption, or in the delights of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ Who was of the seed of David; and for a draught I desire His blood, which is love incorruptible." Elsewhere, in

another letter, he pleads with a Church with which he had relations as follows: "I keep watch over you betimes, as my beloved, for I foresee the snares of the devil. Do ye therefore arm yourselves with gentleness, and recover yourselves in faith which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love which is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let none of you bear a grudge against his neighbour."\*

The blood of Christ is then, we may say, the love of Christ displayed so that all may see it. It is with this love that the Eucharistic cup overflows.

The drops of blood which flowed from the punctures of the nails and the spear have become in Christian minds the most precious of pledges, the most eloquent of symbols, the pledge of God's purpose to set up His tabernacle among men, the symbol of that Divine love which will not rest while there is one sheep still straying upon the mountains, one soul still ensnared in the confusions and deceits of the world—

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved to sin no more." †

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\* Ignatius, Epistles, Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, Rom. 7 and Trall. 8.

† Cowper, *The Olney Hymns*.

## § THE APPEALS OF THE EUCHARIST

The history of the Eucharist has been said to be almost co-extensive with that of the Christian Church. This comprehensiveness will not surprise us when we remember that the distinctive calls and consolations of Christ are here presented and symbolized. Many generations of believers have brought to the Eucharist their faith and devotion, and have received from it the hope and strength they sought. They have enriched it by their study, and been enriched by it in return.

If we watch the hundreds of worshippers who, in one of our churches, throng on an Easter Sunday morning to the Holy Table, we may well speculate as to the motives which prompt them to come. No doubt these range from unthinking habit to the warmest personal love towards Christ. Although, however, we cannot disengage the threads of motive by which the believer is drawn to the Eucharist, we may distinguish the separate appeals which it makes to the heart and the imagination.

Some of the strongest of these are suggested by the names by which the Eucharist has at different times been known. Four calls seem thus to rise above others in emphasis.

1. The first of these is the call to *fraternity*. The three watch-words "liberty, equality, and fraternity" were marks of Christian discipleship



long before they became the battle-cries of a political party. The Gospel contributed to the progress of political and social *liberty* by its insistence upon the fact that all men are members one of another, and that with God there is no respect of persons. It thus created an atmosphere in which it became impossible for one man to regard another as his property or tool. It promoted *equality* by calling into existence a society in which the distinctions of race, sex, and social position ceased to count, in which there "was neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but all were one in Christ Jesus." It invited men to *fraternity*, real and unfeigned, by keeping ever before them the declaration of Christ: "*Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher and all ye are brethren*" (Matt. xxiii. 8).

This *fraternity* is proclaimed anew each time the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The supper is a feast in which the servant kneels by his master's side and with him receives the "broken bread," which is a pledge of their oneness in Christ Jesus.

If this characteristic of the primitive Eucharistic feast has been obscured by our present modes of worship, it becomes all the more necessary to recall it in thought, and give effect to it in our social intercourse.

We cannot, indeed, reproduce the circumstances of the Church's first days. The "upper room" has expanded into the stately cathedral.

The few believers who met for worship in some convenient private house have multiplied into the mixed multitude who now assemble in one of our modern churches. It is impossible that there should be fraternity among the members of a city congregation in the sense the word bore for the church that was "in the house" of Prisca and Aquila, or for the believers that formed the household of Aristobulus.\*

We need not, however, on that account regard Christian fraternity as something made impracticable by the changes of the ever-moving world. We must recognize that it was always a grace which radiated from the heart outwards and found expression in a man's habitual behaviour. Its sources are to be found within. We must never allow ourselves to think that we are exceptional or privileged, or of more account in God's eyes than the least of our brethren. It is an offence against fraternity to suppose that we have special claims upon God because we happen to be either rich or poor, learned or ignorant. He does not favour either rich men or poor men as such.

The fraternity required of us by Christ will be the unsought possession of him who recognizes his kinship with every member of the human family, who does not expect to be exceptionally protected or blessed, who is rather prone to feel uneasy by the recollection of his advantages than to take them as a matter of course. To attempt to create such a state of soul by any

\* See *Romans*, chap. xvi.

form of speech or behaviour is only to simulate it. If we, being rich, go among those who are poor, we do well to forget that they are poor, and to make them forget it also. If we, being learned, are called upon to speak to the ignorant, we shall be most persuasive if we forget our learning and their ignorance.

It is not of serious consequence from the Christian standpoint what a man's earthly situation is, whether he is rich or poor, Greek or barbarian. No doubt there are easy situations and hard situations now as in the days of Christ, and perhaps He would still regard the poor as more likely to listen to His call than the rich. Still the blessedness of which He spoke is accessible from all these positions. Their occupants are all alike objects of God's care, surrounded by the snares of the enemy, the prey of sin and death. We have no business in the sanctuary to divide people into classes. We have to address them on the ground of their common humanity. The Church of Christ for many ages made itself the handmaid of the rich and the powerful. It is now in danger, in the supposed interests of fraternity, of flattering the poor and telling them that, because they are poor, they are therefore and of necessity the favourites of the Almighty. Nietzsche, as is well known, hated Christianity because he believed it to be a democratic religion. Christianity is, however, neither aristocratic nor democratic. To both classes alike it says, "*Labour not for the meat that perisheth.*" Christian

fraternity is to be achieved not by effacing these superficial and transitory distinctions, but by forgetting them in a wider and deeper unity.

2. Another call is heard when we use the word "*Eucharist*." The word itself means *thanksgiving*. Gratitude and trust towards God rose, as we have seen, in the original supper above the shadows of impending calamity. And our own Communion Office, like all ancient Liturgies, is dominated by the note of thankfulness. We lift up our voices with angels and archangels, and with the whole company of heaven, to give thanks to Him of whose glory we claim that the heaven and the earth are full, and we confess that such gratitude should be our feeling at all times and in all places.

What is the gratitude thus intended and regarded as compatible with every earthly situation? We shall not suppose it to be the mere self-congratulation in which we may indulge when we compare our own wealth, if so it be, with the poverty of others—

“ Not more than others I deserve,  
Yet God has given me more ;  
For I have food while others starve,  
And beg from door to door.

“ Lord, I ascribe it to Thy grace,  
And not to chance, as others do,  
That I was born of Christian race  
And not a heathen or a Jew.”

Such a thanksgiving may be quite legitimate.



Plainly, however, it falls short of Eucharistic gratitude. For this is required of those who have little as well as of those who have much, those upon whom the shadows fall no less than those in the sunshine. Indeed, the Feast is one in which joy is chastened by sorrow and sorrow surmounted by joy. Christ gives thanks for the bread which is to be broken on the morrow, for the cup which He prays may pass from Him.

Christian gratitude is thus revealed to us as the feeling of those who do not seek for the satisfaction of their own desires but for the fulfilment of the Divine Will. The philosopher Descartes, when he set out upon his quest after truth, resolved that he would seek happiness rather by moderating his wishes than by multiplying his ambitions. It is only by such moderation that Christian gratitude becomes possible.

Look at the reverse side of the picture. The ungrateful temper is his who makes exorbitant demands, and then, when these demands are, as they must be, unhonoured, gives way to sorrow and bitterness. Thankfulness begins where our legitimate claims, or what we deem such, end. What we think we have a right to we accept as a matter of course. Gratitude thus rises and falls inversely with the sense of our own deserts. It is inconsistent with great expectations. Perhaps it comes more easily to those who have little than to those who have much. In any case it does not need the sunshine of prosperity to ripen it. Wordsworth was overcome, as well he might be, when he observed how little was needed to

awaken gratitude. The gratitude of men caused him more frequent sorrow than their ingratitude.\*

Eucharistic feeling thus submits to imperfect adjustments, and half-lights, and hesitating conclusions. It does not expect that the Divine kingdom will ever be completely realized upon the earth. It looks forward to continuous progress, it may be, but it knows that what *ought* to be will always go beyond what *is*. The heavenly pattern will not descend to the earth, but will be visible only to those who stand on the mount of vision. Entertaining these chastened expectations, it is at liberty to rejoice in the many good things which those who ask for more would disdain. It acquiesces in imperfect answers because they are often the only ones available. Thus it rises above defeats and disappointments, and is able to praise God even from the midst of the fires.

3. The significance of our favourite English name *Communion* for the sacred feast has already been dwelt upon in the interpretation of the words, "This is my body." It suggests, as we saw, a more intimate union with Christ than that conveyed by imitating or following Him. An identification of ourselves with Him is indicated such as moved the Apostle to say that it was not he who lived but Christ who lived in him. In such a communion the individual self with its interests is forgotten, and a larger self

\* See *Simon Lee the Huntsman*.

takes its place. The currents of eternal life have free course within the soul. No one, of course, imagines such an experience, in its fulness, to be common. It belongs to the world of aspiration rather than to that of actual fact. It may, however, be approached by every degree of nearness. Of this self-forgetfulness Christ Himself is the best example. "Christ's human nature was so utterly bereft of self, as no man's ever was, and was nothing else but a house and habitation of God. Neither of that in Him which belonged to God, nor of that which was a living human creature and habitation of God, did He, as man, claim anything for His own. His human nature did not even take unto itself the Godhead, whose dwelling it was ; there was no claiming of anything, no seeking nor desire, saving that what was due might be rendered to the Godhead ; and He did not call this very desire His own."\*

Our present terminology fails us at many points when we apply it to eternal things. When we describe our feelings towards God or His feeling towards us as "love" the spiritual state towards which we are reaching is only dimly indicated by the earthly word. God's love exceeds the noblest human affection as the ocean exceeds the pool. When we say that God "created" the heavens and the earth, what we call creation is an operation or process of which we can conceive neither the beginning nor the end. The human word will not bear the weight of meaning we wish to put upon it. "Person-

\* *Theologia Germanica.*

ality" is another such approximation. God Himself is not a *person* as we are *persons*. Personality, when we ascribe it to Him, acquires a significance which breaks through our ordinary conceptions of its meaning. We use the word because we must. But it becomes, thus employed, an admitted symbol. And of this eucharistic communion with Christ vividly reminds us.

The conception of personality has, perhaps, taken a wrong turning through our everyday usage. It may readily suggest eccentricity or divergence from the common type. A "personality" is commonly understood to be some one who differs markedly from ordinary mankind. Thus, when we speak of the "miracles of personality," or of the five or six persons but for whom the course of the world would have been different, we inevitably think of men separated from their fellows by great and obvious differences. Our thoughts are directed towards the self-assertiveness which shows itself in singularity, and a departure from ordinary custom. It is probable, however, that the great personalities of history were distinguished from their fellows chiefly by the sense that they were the instruments of a Power who was using them for His purposes. It was probably the overpowering feeling of vocation which most of all isolated them. If this really were so their "personality" would be something very different from what our present use of the word would suggest. In any case the great religious founders have all



spoken and acted as the mouthpieces or interpreters of One greater than themselves. They have all, in their various ways, made personal greatness or even separate individuality subservient to some imperious call.

4. The last supper of our Lord was a *sacrificial feast* where the victim sat, a living man, at the table. In the Roman Catholic Communion this aspect of the Eucharist overshadows all others. The sacrifice offered at each celebration of the Mass\* is held to be a "continuation" of that on Calvary.

Even when such a theory is rejected as destroying the nature of a sacrament by effacing the outward sign and leaving only the thing symbolized, the Eucharist may still be truly described as a *sacrifice*. Our union with Christ is a union with Him in sacrifice.

One peculiar feature of Christian sacrifice in general seems indeed to gain in the Eucharist unusual distinctness. The blending of joy and sorrow which belongs to the feast, however it be regarded, colours it still when it is looked upon as a sacrifice. The sacrifices of all kinds which the disciple of Christ is called upon to make—crucifixions of the old man with his affections

\* The origin of the word "Mass" is much disputed. The most credible theory seems to be that the word is derived from the mediæval Latin *Missa* = *Missio*, dismissal. When the Catechumens were dismissed it seems to have been customary to say, *Ite missa est*—literally "Go, there is a dismissal."

and lusts—are not to him painful abnegations, but steps toward a fuller life. If he dies it is that he may live. So the most effectual sacrifices do not seem to those who make them to be sacrifices at all. They are quite unconscious of the pains which others think they must be suffering. They are in reality doing the very thing they like best. They repeat the experience of the three Hebrew children and remain untouched by the flames which to the onlookers seem so destructive. St. Paul as the minister and bond-servant of Christ passed through many hardships. But they did not seem such to him. The hardship would have been had he declined his task. "*Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.*" They who follow the Christ with whom they sup in the Eucharistic feast are called upon indeed to share His sacrifice, but the sacrifice to which He invites them, if it brings them the sharpest pain, is the source also of the keenest joy.\*

\* Cp. Coventry Patmore, *Religio Poetae*: "Men with great strength of real apprehension are easily capable of things which inferior characters regard as great self-sacrifices. To such men such things are no more sacrifice than in an ordinary man it would be to exchange a ton of lead for a pound of gold. 'Their hearts do not forget the things their eyes have seen'; and persons like General Gordon or Sir Thomas More would stare if you called anything they did or suffered by the name of sacrifice."



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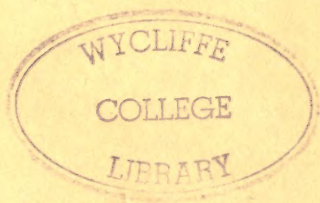
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